

BOOKS AND THEATRES

By EDWARD GORDON CRAIG

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PREFACE

I HAVE to thank innumerable writers of books and workers in archives and libraries for many years of valuable assistance to an artist while coasting along the edge of one of the historical seas.

To name all these scholars would not only be difficult, but it would be taking myself as historian a little too seriously and claiming the protection of great names for a very little matter.

But I cannot omit to thank the archivisti and bibliotecarii of Italy for their courtesy and help to me, especially the director of the Biblioteca Nazionale in Torino, Dr. Torre, and his lieutenant, Marchese Curlo; Dr. Montagnani of Modena; Dr. Verga and the Director of the Archivio di Stato in Milano; Dr. Mariotti and Prof. Capelli of Parma; Dr. Grosso and Ing Pettorelli of Genova; Signor Bemporad of Firenze, and Prof. Torelli of Mantova.

Last, and assuredly not least, comes the author of that remarkable book, *I Teatri di Bologna*, Comm. Corrado Ricci.

To him and his colleagues in all the archives I offer this trifle and will ask them to accept it as a slight offering from an unemployed artist of the Theatre, who ventures for the first time to dip a finger into the icy waters of history.

GORDON CRAIG.

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JOHN EVELYN
AND THE THEATRE
IN ENGLAND, FRANCE AND ITALY

JOHN EVELYN AND THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND, FRANCE AND ITALY

PART ONE

BEFORE ITALY

HAS it not been admitted long ago that John Evelyn is one of the most charming, one of the best of English travellers? No great traveller in the sense that he goes long distances; but wherever he does go he behaves better than anyone else. Coryat, who races through Italy, France, Germany, England and the Netherlands in five months, hastily gobbling up, as he admits, these morsels,—“and now,” he adds, “dispensing to the nourishment of the travelling man of this kingdom”—Coryat must be grumbling at all he sees, five months for five lands, . . . a month a-piece . . . always finding things “bегarly,” always comparing unfavourably, always showing an astonished open mouth (if not an open mind) at “things I never saw before”; in short, always rude.

But Evelyn, enjoying himself, never grumbles that he is abroad; and what better behaviour than this were possible? His travels take him no further than Italy.

Starting on Wednesday, the 11 November, 1643, at the age of twenty-three, he stops a while in Paris, goes down to Genoa; on to Siena; arrives in Roma, getting there on Friday, 4 November, 1644. So he has taken a full year to reach the fine city, and there he loiters till the end of January, 1645, that is to say, for three months.

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Now to begin with, this is good behaviour; for to rush to, and through a place, a place which is not your own, is to be in a hurry. To do a thing in a hurry is a pity, and to visit a place like Italy, which men have laboured for centuries to perfect, with haste as your guide, unless you be a monarch, a great person, whose time is not his own but his people's, or a courier or a commercial traveller, is to be a donkey; such a donkey as was Coryat, as was Lithgow, as was neither Byron nor Goethe. Yet, for me, Evelyn is a better traveller than either of these two. He is so staid, yet so able to enjoy.

Again, Evelyn does not potter around looking for trouble; no one tortures Evelyn, whereas Mr. William Lithgow, who spent nineteen years afoot, went 36,000 miles, seemed unable to rest until he was on the rack.

After leaving Roma, Evelyn goes down to Napoli, but returns to Roma, recollecting in time that if he once sees Napoli properly, he must die, preferring to have a last glance at Roma, and to live to see Venezia. So he is back in Roma by Monday, 13 February, and stays there until Thursday, 18 May, enjoying the early spring—"purchasing many books—pictures and curiosities." Then Venezia calls, and he moves in that direction so as to be there, "if possible, by the Ascension," in May, regretfully "turning about to behold this once and yet glorious city [Rome] from an eminence . . . to give it my last farewell." Is he not charming as a traveller? Who understands so well, the secret of this youthful, ancient city, "This once and yet glorious city." Others would not have risen to the "and yet."

While purchasing books and pictures in Italy he had met all the men of note, seen most things, enjoying all the things he had seen, without unusual surprise, yet without missing a spark of the novelty of it all; gardens,

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houses, grottoes, hangings and other executions, carnival impertinences, fireworks, ruins, sermons, jewels, sculpture, men and women, all these things are immensely pleasing to Mr. John Evelyn; and it is just because he is such a gentleman of the world, never in a hurry, always at his ease and keen about all that is happening, that I value so highly all that he writes about the Theatres which he found pleasant to visit. And he writes of them as he writes of Cardinals or of ruins, of pictures or the fireworks; to him they all live, and each lives with its own life, and is therefore not to be confounded with the others. Never does he fail to understand—and so never is he rude. Indeed, a charming Englishman; and, after he had left Italy, assuredly those Italians who had met him must have been forced to revise their judgments of the northern savages.

I cannot imagine old Pepys toddling down to Roma. He evidently could not imagine himself doing that, and so he did not go . . . wise old man: and surely this Pepys was born old even as Evelyn died young at eighty-six. Pepys' words are so often quoted, his chatty bits about Nell Gwynne, Drury Lane and so home to bed, with all the rest of it. He has grown so stale and parochial that he has ceased for me to be anything but a bore. He is the Democrat's blessing, I know it; still I would like to ship him to Germany in exchange for Shakespeare. He is so comfortable, and *gemütlich* he could remain . . . in Germany.

A dear old man, perhaps; and without him so much would be lost when we come to the passages in Evelyn's book when the two men meet long after Evelyn's travels are over forever and a day. At these moments my mind's eye glances back across the Alps, and I look at Evelyn. We are in Pepys' snug smug room . . . outside the window a grey mist, and lanterns and the moving torches .

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here, this little traveller, now grown old, stands against the mantelpiece listening to "the rare voice of Mr. Pule, who was lately come from Italy," singing "several compositions of the late Dr. Purcell." Mr. Pule (plain Paoli, or Paul, in Venezia without any Mr.) is doing his best with the sad sweet Irish airs of Purcell. When he returns home to Venezia he will tell them of Purcell and of sadness: of that no doubt whatever. But will he speak of il Signor Pepys? "Yes," he may say, "a Londra, c'è un Signore . . . *molto ricco* . . . vada, Bruno, vada, a Londra" . . . adding, "and do not forget when you do go to call yourself *Mr. Brun*. It's only over here that we, the Vincis and the Cellinis, are known by our christian names Paolo, Leonardo, Benvenuto. In London it isn't done." And as Evelyn stands there, he knows this, but he will not undeceive poor old Pepys; the thought brings back to him a glimpse of his early days in Italy.¹

No, he will not undeceive poor old Pepys; Pepys so ready to believe all he hears about Drury Lane or Nell Gwynne, but almost unaware that Italy is a real place.

What Pepys tells us of the Theatre is not worth the telling. He had no ears, and no eyes even when his sight was good.²

Evelyn had taken care to acquire acute senses before he left for Italy, as you will see when I remind you of what he did, and what he heard and saw, and how he received it all. I cannot write of it all: I may not make a big book, nor could I if I might, but I wish to linger a short while on all that he speaks of concerning the Theatre, even if I make a small book in doing so, and I will repeat all he says, and begin at the beginning.

¹ Well, to be strict to history, there was a large family called Polo in Venezia: so he could be one of these; a Mr. Polo, . . . but Mr. Pule, never.

² I have read his Diary, and I find it not readable. Yet how vastly more popular than Evelyn's.

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FIRST of all I will hazard a reason for Evelyn's interest in the Theatre.

The earliest record of his about a play is one associated with pain . . . and, as we know, there is nothing so surely brings back a clear remembrance of a thing as pain does.¹

Something we had not loved so very much (not having noted it) becomes dear to us, not because of the pain, but because our mind must return, and return again, to consider this unnoted thing.

And, so it was with Evelyn and the Theatre. Evelyn is seventeen years old: "The Christmas ensuing being at a comedy, which the gentlemen of Exeter College presented to the University, and standing, for the better advantage of seeing, upon a table in the Hall, which was near to another, in the dark being constrained by the extraordinary press to quit my station, in leaping down to save myself I dashed my right leg with such violence against the sharp edge of the other board, as gave me a hurt which held me in cure till most Easter, and confined me to my study."—OXFORD, 9 December, 1637.

Confined to his study for thirteen to fourteen weeks, his thoughts turn again and again to the Comedy . . . to this stage vision which was suddenly blotted out without reason and the last glimpse of it bitten into the brain . . . into the whole being rather.

¹ "One day when I [Benvenuto Cellini] was about five years old, my father was sitting in a ground-floor room of ours in which washing had been going on, and where a large fire of oak logs had been left. Giovanni, his viola on his arm, was playing and singing by himself near the fire, for it was very cold. Looking into the fire, he chanced to see in the middle of the most ardent flames, a little creature like a lizard disporting himself in the midst of the intensest heat. Suddenly aware of what it was, he called my sister and me and pointed it out to us children. Then he gave me a sound box on the ears, which made me cry bitterly, at which he soothed me with kind words, saying, 'Carino mio, I do not hurt you for any harm you had done; but only that you might remember that lizard in the fire there is a Salamander, which has never been seen for a certainty by anyone before.' Then he kissed me and gave me some farthings."—*Vita di Benvenuto Cellini*.

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The first Theatre entry in his Diary records a comedy seen in England, the second records a perspective—the third some marionnettes—the fourth a theatre: all seen in Paris as he lingers there on his way to Italy . . . play, scene, performers and theatre, all in the right order.

He stays in the French capital from the beginning of December, 1643, until the middle of April, 1644. Four and a half months is a long time; there is ample margin to see things, many little things, in eighteen weeks, more especially since things were really happening in 1644 in Paris. Molière is in Paris, he is beginning to play comedies, but he is not attracting much attention, so no one seems to have taken Evelyn to see him. On 1 January of this year Evelyn could have seen Molière at the Faubourg St. Germain, and seen "The Illustrious Theatre" at work, for it was founded that year: or he could have seen him at the Jeu de Paume de la Croix Noire on the Quai St. Paul. (Plate 2.) But neither Molière nor "The Illustrious Theatre" seems to have been quite ripe. Molière is not yet even taking his lessons from the great Italian comedian, Tiberio Fiorilli (Fig. 1), and it is only after he has done so in 1645 that he perceives how long the craft of Italian acting will take to master, and that, as life is as short as ever, seven or eight years will not be too long a time to devote to the study and practice of the craft. And so, off he goes into the French provinces to hide his blundering first steps, concocting at the end of that time his first comedy, more or less a copy of an Italian comedy, called *The Blunderer*.

Evelyn, looking around, overlooks this little beginner, Molière. Yet he has his eyes wide open, and one or two curious things are noted down by him. The first of these is a piece of skilful perspective, not this time in a theatre, but on a wall, in Cardinal Richelieu's villa at Ruell. In



Figure 1. TIBERIO FIORILLI. (From an engraving by Habert.)

the Orangery there he is pulled up by perceiving at the end of it, "the Arch of Constantine, painted on a wall in oil (?) as large as the real one in Rome,¹ so well done, that even a man skilled in painting, may mistake it for stone and sculpture. The sky and hills, which seem to be between the arches, are so natural, that swallows and other birds, thinking to fly through, have dashed themselves against the wall. I was infinitely taken with this agreeable cheat." Here we have an example of that perspective painting which was soon to play an important part in the Theatre of the next hundred years or so.

It had not yet become the fashion in the north to paint perspectives in the Theatres, but it was occasionally employed to lengthen or vary the appearance of small courtyards. (Plate 3.) (Mr. Povey had an elegant house in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1664 with a perspective painted by Streeter in his court. Count de Liancourt had one, as we shall see, in his garden in the Rue de Seine in 1644. In Italy they were the fashion.) And some perspective scenes

¹ He had not yet seen the "real one in Rome," and so it is likely that he only reports what he is told by his guide.

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were being done at this time in Italy, and by painters, although the artists interested in the Theatre were striving to perfect a different kind of perspective scene there. This was a thing built according to the rules of false perspective.¹

This painting on the wall at Ruell was, to Evelyn, an "agreeable cheat." Well, so long as it was agreeable to him, who shall find fault? Evelyn is a gentleman who is able to persuade me, by his plain way, to many a pleasant folly employed by our ancestors in their life and in their Theatres, against which all the dull logic of more cynical men would not persuade me.

Evelyn's quiet delight in devoting fifteen lines to recording this glimpse of a small marionnette Theatre in Paris delights me, too, in just the same way, and in like measure no less, no more.

I have not come across his find in any other record: even the historians Magnin (1852) and Maindron (*circa* 1890), Rehm (*circa* 1892), Joseph (1920),² seem to have been unaware of this Teatrino, and it is no usual one. I hope some day to find a design showing us what it looked like: here is something for a student to search for in the archives of Paris. And this is Evelyn's entry: "I went to see the Count de Liancourt's Palace³ in the Rue de Seine (Plate 4), which is well built. Towards his study and bed-

¹ See later "Vicenza"; 1646, March, Page 30, and Plates 18 and 19.

² Magnin, C. *Histoire des Marionnettes en Europe* (1852). Michel Lévy Frères, Paris.

Maindron, E. *Marionnettes et Guignols (circa 1890)*. Félix Juven, Paris.

Rehm, S. *Das Buch der Marionetten (circa 1892)*. Ernst Frensdorff, Berlin.

Joseph, H. H. *A Book of Marionettes* (1920). B. W. Huebsch, New York.

³ Perhaps the Count de Liancourt should be put down as eccentric because he finds pleasure in having such things as marionnettes in his palace. Magnin, the historian, tells us that the Duc de Guise, in 1650, had such little figures in his château at Meudon; that Charles V. had them in the monastery of Saint Justin; that Mme. la Duchesse de Berry, in 1713, had them at Versailles; the Duchesse de Maine, in 1705, at Sceaux; Voltaire at Cirey had them and wrote for them; Cosimo I. of Florence at the Palazzo Vecchio and Francesco I. at the Uffizi enjoy these spectacles; Lorenzo de' Medici too. The long

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chamber joins a little garden, which, though very narrow, by the addition of a well-painted perspective, is to appearance greatly enlarged; to this there is another part, supported by arches, in which runs a stream of water, rising in the aviary, out of a statue, and seeming to flow for some miles, by being artificially continued in the painting, when it sinks down at the wall. It is a very agreeable deceit. At the end of this garden is a little theatre, made to change with divers pretty scenes, and the stage so ordered, with figures of men and women painted on light boards, and cut out, and, by a person who stands underneath, made to act as if they were speaking, by guiding them, and reciting words in different tones, as the parts require. We were led into a round cabinet, where was a near invention for reflecting lights by lining divers sconces with thin shining plates of gilded copper.”¹—ST. GERMAIN, 1 *March*, 1644.

Obviously one of the most interesting records of a seventeenth-century marionnette theatre which exists. Evelyn has seven more entries which touch on this little branch of Theatre work.

While in Paris, Evelyn “often went to the Palais

list of ladies and gentlemen who have understood these beings is unending. Charles Perrault (1628–1703) in his *Conte de Peau d’Ane* writes:

“ Pour moi, j’ose poser en fait
Qu’en de certains momens l’esprit le plus parfait
Peut aimer sans rougir jusqu’aux marionnettes,
Et qu’il est des temps et des lieux
Où le grave et le sérieux
Ne valent pas d’agréables sonnettes ”;

and an “entire day,” writes Girolamo Cardan, the celebrated mathematician and physician (1550), “would not be sufficient in which to describe these puppets that play, fight, shoot, dance and make music”; while Bernardino Baldi in 1575 pens a sonnet to Urbin the great mathematician, who loved them, wherein he praises the puppets. By all this we see that puppets of distinction were discovered before 1523.

¹ 1644. This is by no means an early record, for even in England, in 1573, Italian marionnettes or *pupazzi* established themselves in London, and the Lord Mayor authorises them to “be allowed to settle in the city and to carry on their strange motions, as in the past and from time immemorial.” And can’t one see and hear the eager Italian, as he applies for a licence, whispering

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Cardinal" and saw its theatre; of this he says no more than that he saw it. Of the performances there, if he was present at any, he has nothing to say.

In fact, he is struck by no dramatic performance at all in Paris. Yet Richelieu's theatre was just opened (January, 1641), and the Cardinal liked things done properly, and as Evelyn moved in high circles he would have had little difficulty in being present at the properest of Court performances.

In the Marais tennis court, in Paris, performances were to be seen with Mondory (a fine actor, one hears) in the chief parts. Tiberio Fiorilli¹ was in Paris in 1639 and 1645.

Yet Evelyn speaks of none of these. Perhaps he is waiting until he sees the work of the Italian Theatre. When he comes upon this, he speaks to some purpose, as we shall see later.

to the Lord Mayor's secretary, saying, "Tell him, Signor, tell him that since Gesù Cristo, nay even since the Padre Eterno himself, this noble company of little people have praised the creation. Tell him that the Pope in Roma sanctions my cousin's marionnettes . . . and his are not a patch on mine. Tell him this." . . . The secretary, charmed, warmed, nods his head, and with twinkling eye, goes in to see Mr. Richard Hobson, wool merchant of the city of London. "Do you think it will be all right, Macklin?" asks the Mayor. "Well," replies the secretary, "I don't know—but the Pope . . ." "Yes, it's rather strange of a Pope . . . still . . ." and he signs, and rather happily smiles as he signs. The secretary returns to the showman in two moments with a charter.

¹ The name of this actor is sometimes incorrectly spelt, and this brings to the student a large slice of trouble. There were two other actors of Italy born in Napoli and who wrote their names FIORILLO. Our actor's name is spelt FIORILLI.

Maurice Sand for no known reason misspelt it as FIURELLI, and H. Maynard Smith, Andrew de Ternant, Allardyce Nicoll, J. A. Symonds and M. Moland make the same error.

On the other hand those who spell it correctly are: Costantini (1695); F. Bartoli (1701); Campardon (1871); A. Bartoli (1880); Pougin (1885); Rasi (1897); Mantzius (1903); Toldo (1910); and Tonelli (1924).

On seeing a document signed by this actor in 1667 on 25 March, and noting that he too spells his name letter for letter as do these nine authorities, our opinion of them as careful historians is not weakened.

M. Andrew de Ternant was so particular, recently, to "correct" a correspondent in *Notes and Queries*, saying that Fiorilli's name must be spelt *Fiurilli*, that these few words will not be amiss. (For Fiorilli's portrait see Fig. 1.)

PART TWO

ITALY

AND now he goes down towards Italy, stopping here and there on his way to make a note of a theatre or two. On Thursday, 15 September, "a singing theatre" is noted in the Cardinal's old house at Richelieu; another, an amphitheatre, in ruins but "pretty entire," at Vienne in Dauphiné; this on Friday, 30 September; and on Sunday, 9 October, "the ruins of a most stately amphitheatre" at Périgueux "which I went out to design," and which was called the Rolsies.

Then at last—Italy! He passes through Genova, Pisa, Livorno—and on to Firenze, arriving there on Sunday, 23 October, and leaving in a few days for Siena, or Sienna, as he writes it. Here he seems for the first time to get word of Italian opera, for he writes: "In the Senate House (Plate 5a) is a very fair Hall, where they sometimes entertain the people with public shows and operas,¹ as they call them."—SIENNA, *October, 1644*.

The "very fair Hall" here spoken of by Evelyn is seen in the plan which I give here of the Senate House (Plate 5b). It was a theatre built in 1560 by Bartolomeo Neroni, detto Riccio, to be rebuilt in 1753 by Antonio Bibiena, a son of *il Famoso Bibiena*, i.e. Ferdinando Galli of Bibiena. A theatre is still there but it does not look very interesting, and as most of Antonio Bibiena's theatres

¹ Such operas had not yet been seen or heard in England, and it is not until thirty years later, on 5 January, 1674, that Evelyn, then fifty-four years of age, reports the arrival of the first Italian opera in England.

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look most interesting I doubt if the Siena remains are those of the 1753 playhouse.

So far, Evelyn seems to have seen no performances, probably for the reason that it is not yet Carnival time when he arrives in Italy, and it was usually only at Carnival time that the Italian theatres were in full swing.

From Siena he goes on through Monte Oliveto, Buon Convento, Torrinieri, to San Quirico. Here, presumably, was born much later that abominable scenographer, Alessandro Sanquirico. Evelyn would not have called his work "abominable"; what would he have said of it, I wonder? Here Evelyn sees nothing of any theatre, but he writes, "... we lay at a private osteria near it [the village], where, after we were provided of lodging, came in Cardinal Donghi, a Genoese by birth, now come from Rome; he was so civil as to entertain us with great respect, hearing we were English, for that he told us he had been once in our country. . . . He came with great state with his own bedstead and all the furniture, yet would by no means suffer us to resign the room we had taken up in the lodging before his arrival." The silence of this little place, the bustle of a coloured Cardinal coming laden with beds and things from one direction, meeting with our plain Evelyn, coming bedless from another; the one old, knowing Roma and most things else so well; the other young, and spruce and all so polite and polished. I like it, for it reminds me of an unwritten chapter by Dumas.

On goes Evelyn, and up to Radicofani twelve miles further to Acquapendente, down to the Lake of Bolsena, to Montefiascone, to Viterbo. Then a rest, then on to Capranica, and, arriving in Roma on Friday, 4 November, he enters it by the Vatican gate "wet to the skin" owing to a violent shower.

Evelyn stayed at the house of Monsieur Petit (at

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twenty crowns a month), went to bed, caused a good fire to be made, and so got dry. This house was near the Piazza Spagnola, or Piazza di Spagna (Plate 6), where *forestieri* of note were wont to lodge. It was here that Byron, Keats, de Brosses, and Monte Cristo . . . but I must not mix the real and the fanciful . . . back to our Evelyn.

The next morning he quickly gets acquainted with several English, Scotch, and Irish men dwelling in Roma, and to whom he had brought letters of recommendation. To Father John, superior of the English college of Douay; to Mr. Patrick Cary, brother of Lord Falkland; to Dr. Bacon and Dr. Gibbs, a Scotchman; to Father Courtney of the Jesuit College, and my Lord of Somerset, from whom he received "instructions how to behave in town," and all else he wished to learn.

He engages a cicerone to take him round, and on his second day, Sunday, 6 November, sees so much (recording it all) that to anyone who has been in Roma it is a wonder how he did it. On the day following he sees his first Theatre . . . the Theatre Marcello: "We went into the Theatre of Marcellus, which would hold 80,000 persons, built by Augustus and dedicated to his nephew; the architecture, from what remains, appears to be inferior to none. It is now wholly converted into the house of the Savelli, one of the old Roman families." (Plate 7.)

That which remained on 7 November, 1644, more or less, remains now. The Palace built in the Theatre and on it, now belongs to the Orsini family. The same day that Evelyn saw this old classic masterpiece he went on to the Palazzo Barberini designed by Cavaliero Bernini, went through it and somehow missed seeing the Theatre in the Palace built by Bernini in 1634. It must have looked splendid, being then but ten years old, and one of the earliest of that shape. Still, on Saturday, 19 November,

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he has this entry when alluding to the Baldacchino in St. Peter's: "It is the work of Bernini, a Florentine sculptor, architect, painter, and poet, who, a little time before my coming to the city, gave a public opera (for so they call shows of that kind)¹ wherein he painted the scenes, cut the statues, invented the engines, composed the music, writ the comedy, and built the theatre," as, of course, anyone will have to do in the future who would create a drama all of a piece. It is interesting to know it has already been done in 1644.

On Tuesday, 8 November, he comes across something very closely related to the Italian Theatre, though not actually in a theatre: "This evening I was invited to hear rare music at the Chiesa Nova . . . the tapers being lighted, one of the order preached; after him stepped up a child of eight or nine years old, who pronounced an oration with so much grace that I never was better pleased than to hear Italian so well and so intelligently spoken. This course it seems they frequently use, to bring their scholars to a habit of speaking distinctly and forming their action and assurance, which none so much wants as ours in England. This being finished, began their Motettos, which, in a lofty cupola, richly painted, were sung by eunuchs and other rare voices, accompanied by theorboas, harpsichords, and viols, so that we were even ravished with the entertainment of the evening."²

When in Roma, Evelyn does not seem to have noted

¹ See Siena, page 13.

² "Which none so much wants as ours in England," wrote Evelyn on 8 November, 1644. Which none so much wants as ours in England, I echo to-day. And why not get what we so much need? all will surely ask. I have written elsewhere of this. I am preparing a small book about those colleges wherein so many young princes, and even those less highly born, were trained to act, to speak, to carry themselves, to achieve the assurance which Evelyn speaks of. These colleges contained theatres, real theatres. They did not fear the theatre in those days. It would seem they understood some of its values, one of which is to train young men who will have to take part in the play of public life how to stand, move and speak before a public like princes.

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down anything about the Theatre built in the Vatican by Bramante in 1514, although it appears he passed through it. It looks so untheatrical, maybe that is why, like someone well-dressed, it escaped observation.

He went further south for a few weeks, but even in Napoli does not speak of the Teatro dei Fiorentini, which, built in 1618, was renovated in 1707, and so was at Evelyn's service, more especially since he was there during Carnival.

He returned to Roma on Monday, 13 February, 1645, and on the 17th is invited, after dinner, to the Academy of the Humorists. "I was invited after dinner," he writes, "to the Academy of the Humorists,¹ kept in a spacious Hall belonging to Signor Paolo Mancini (Plate 8), where the wits of the towns meet on certain days to recite poems, and debate on several subjects. The first that speaks is called the Lord, and stands in an eminent place, and then the rest of the Virtuosi recite in order. By these ingenious exercises, besides the learned discourse, is the purity of the Italian language daily improved. The room is being hung round with devices, or emblems, with mottoes under

¹About the year 1600, some *beaux esprits*, who assisted at the marriage of Paolo Lucio Mancini, a Roman gentleman, exercised their wit, in the course of the evening, in composing sonnets and epigrammatic verses on the ladies who were present. Pleased with this amusement Mancini, a man of learning and of taste, invited his guests to a further exercise of their talents. Regular meetings were now established, and the plan of amusement extended. Though the hasty ebullitions of wit were not suppressed or discouraged, the members, says Muratori, chiefly devoted themselves to the composition and recital of beautiful and ingenious ("vaghe ed ingegnose") comedies. At these "merry meetings" all the principal nobility and gentry of Rome attended. The fame of the academy spread, and the associates were universally denominated "i begli umori." This name was afterwards changed into that of Umoristi or Humorists, on the theatrical exhibitions giving place to the recitations of poetical compositions on various subjects. The *sale*, or spacious apartment in which these meetings were held, still existed in the time of Muratori, decorated with the arms of the principal members. Tassoni, a distinguished associate, thus immortalises this academy in the eleventh canto of his *Secchia Rapita*:

"Spedì il corriere a Gaspar Salviani
Decan de l'accademia de' Mancini."

Historical Memoir of Italian Tragedy, Joseph Cooper Walker (1798), pages 158-159.

What "i begli umori" means, Mr. Walker does not explain.

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them. There are several other Academies of this nature, bearing like fantastical titles. In this of the Humorists is the picture of Guarini, the famous author of the *Pastor Fido*, once of this society. The chief part of the day we spent in hearing the academic exercises."—ROME, 17 February, 1645.

I should say that actors, living at this time in Italy, who wished to hold their own with an audience who went in for "these ingenious exercises," and who "daily improved the Italian tongue," must have been rather fine speakers, and rather exceptional in most other ways. I well understand, after reading this passage in the Diary, how it was that the actress Isabella Andreini could speak many languages, write sonnets, invent plays, and pen such "letters" as she published in 1588 and 1607 and reprinted four times . . . in 1612, 1617, 1625 and 1634.

One turns to Tarlton's Jest Book (1611), and, however funny one may find some of the jokes, it must be confessed they lack grace; possibly owing to the fact that in England those "ingenious exercises" of speech did not daily improve our English tongue, and actors had therefore less to keep them conscious of a fine standard in the way of speech and carriage: who knows?

On Saturday the 28th of February, Evelyn goes out into the street to see what Roman Carnival is like. "We were taken up next morning in seeing the impertinences of the Carnival, when all the world are as mad at Rome as at other places; but the most remarkable were the three races of the Barbary horses, that run in the Strada dell Corso without riders, only having spurs so placed on the backs, and hanging down by their sides, as by their motion to stimulate them; then of mares, then of asses, of buffaloes, naked men, old and young, and boys, and abundance of idle ridiculous pastime. One thing is remarkable, their acting comedies on a stage placed on a cart or



CENTRAL SECTION OF ROME IN 1748 (NOLLI).

- 1022. Teatro di Marcello and Palazzo Orsini: in 1644 Palazzo Savelli.
- 636. Palazzo Pio with ruins of the Teatro di Pompeo.
- 847. Collegio Romano. } A theatre was in each of these buildings in the
- 647. Cancellaria. } eighteenth century.
- 611. (Near the Piazza Navona.) Teatro della Pace.
- 618. Teatro de Granari.
- 771. Teatro d'Argentina (1732). 795. Teatro della Valle (1726).
- 332. Teatro Capranica (1678-9).

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plaustrum, where the scene or tiring-place is made of boughs in a rural manner, which they drive from street to street with a yoke or two of oxen, after the ancient guise. The streets swarm with prostitutes, buffoons, and all manner of rabble." — ROME, 28 February, 1645.

Ademollo has a word to say on this passage in the Diary.¹

What comedies were acted, and whether by professional actors or young college students, whether it was a genuine survival of the ancient mode, or a "revival" like the Elizabethan Society or like some "League of True Art," or whether merely a group of masqueraders pretending to be acting comedies, seems very uncertain.

On May-day he goes to his first play since his arrival

¹ "Passing over the whole of the sixteenth century, we find another experiment, also in the open air, at the beginning of the following century. In fact, while Riario's music, sung in the open air or in an enclosed place, had a scenic setting, this second one has for theatre a car which moves from one piazza to another. The invention is due to Pietro della Valle, a celebrated traveller, artist and man of learning, and perhaps also the author of the poem, who in his well-known letter of 16 January, 1640, to Lelio Guidiccioni speaks in the following terms of the musical composition, the work of Paolo Quagliati, and of the performance given of it in the Carnival of 1606:—

"And in regard to the music of my Car composed by Quagliati for the most part in my room, according as he saw it pleased me, with which I went out in mask in the Carnival of the year 1606. And it was one of the first actions (so to speak) performed in music to be heard in Rome. Although there did not take part more than five voices and five instruments, just as many as, in a moving choir, could have place, they did not for this reason sing only one at a time, but the personages stand now alone, now two together, now three, and, at the end, five, which produced a very fine effect; and the music of that song, as may be seen in the printed volumes in circulation, although the greater part was composed in such manner as to be represented, was not altogether of that simple and over-trivial style which many use, and which soon becomes tiresome to the audience; but was adorned and full of grace with charm, without departing at all from an elevated and studied manner of representation, so that it pleased extremely; and this could be well seen by the concourse of almost the whole city which followed it; and it not only never wearied the hearers, but many of them wished to hear it four or six times, and there were some who followed it always to all the ten or twelve places where the singing went on from twenty-four o'clock * until after midnight."

"It is known that the use of these theatrical cars continued in Rome. The Englishman, John Evelyn, who was here in 1645, that is forty years after the car of Pietro della Valle, tells us in his Memoirs of having seen them, and describes them: 'On the car or *plaustrum* the scene is formed by branches rustically disposed, and these ambulant theatres go about the streets drawn by two or four oxen.'" — A. Ademollo, *I Teatri di Roma nel secolo decimo settimo*, pp. 2-3.

* Probably sunset.

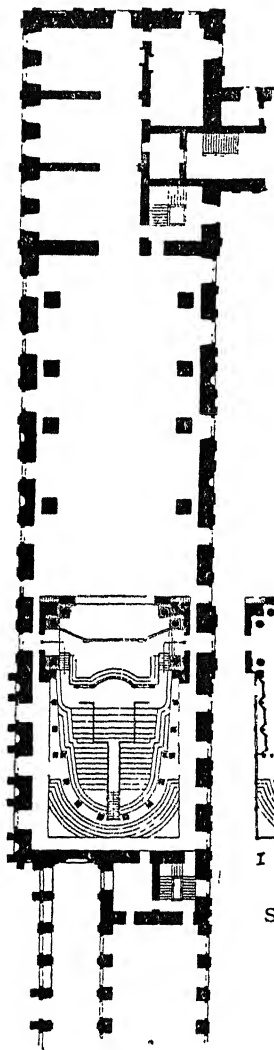
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in Italy, and curiously enough it is an English play. "We were entertained at night with an English play at the Jesuits', where we before had dined." The next evening he is at Prince Galicano's palace. There he witnesses his first Italian opera. The name he does not give, but it was *Proserpina Rapita*. Prince Galicano composed the music and there "were present Cardinal Pamphilio, the Pope's nephew, the Governors of Rome, Girolamo Lomellino of Rome, the Cardinals' ambassadors, ladies, and a number of nobility and strangers." One of the ambassadors is De Valençoy. Evelyn calls it "a magnificent opera," and there an end.

There was also a *Barriera* that day. "There had been in the morning a joust and tournament of several young gentlemen on a formal defy, to which we had been invited; the prizes being distributed by the ladies, after the knight-errantry way. The lancers and swordsmen running at tilt against the barriers, with a great deal of clatter, but without any bloodshed, giving much diversion to the spectators, and was new to us travellers."

And this well describes the playfulness of a *Barriera*, performed, it seems, as often as not, in the great room of the palace. The design by Sacchi (Plate 9) gives us the appearance of a *Barriera* in the open air, but whether indoors or outdoors it was ever a formal ceremony where the arts of war were made amusing. Callot has engraved at least one such indoors *Barriera*.

"A magnificent opera," was all Evelyn wrote of the evening performance, and we may add a magnificent audience. This opera was performed in the private theatre of Prince Galicano; it was not a twelve-foot stage with a proscenium, and some footlights hired from the theatrical outfitter in Roma (if such a business existed in those days); it was a specially constructed "teatro" like that in Parma



It was the famous Gaspare Vigarani who built this Salle des Machines, assisted by Amandini.

Bapst in his *Essai* refers to a *Charles Vigarani* as having built it, but this Charles was a musician.

This Salle, built for the marriage of Louis XIV., was contracted to be ready by 1660, but was only ready by 1662.

It was a larger facsimile of the Teatro Spelta in Modena (*see De Brosse*).

It and its forerunners, the Teatro Spelta, the Teatro Farnese, Parma, the Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, the Teatro Ducale, Milano, the Teatro Falcone, Genova, and a number more, were really private theatres—that is the important point—not places seemingly for the public as are theatres to-day and actually for making money out of the people, no one benefiting but the profiteers.

This is the thing to remember when looking at all these stupendous efforts in theatre building; this is the thing you are likely to forget.

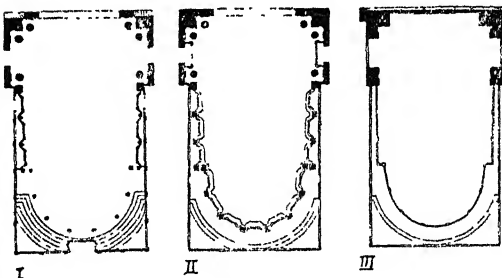


FIGURE 2

SALLE DES MACHINES, TUILERIES, PARIS
1659-1662

AFTER THE PLATES BY MAROT
Ground plan, 1st tier, 2nd tier, 3rd tier.

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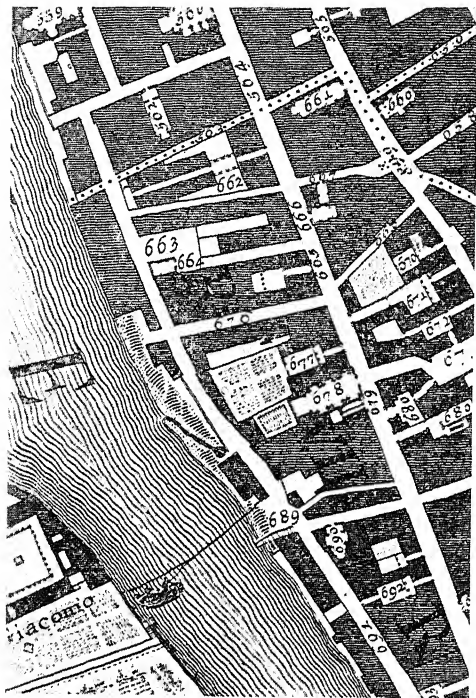
in the Palazzo Farnese (1619); or like those in the court at Torino (1638); or in the Palazzo Barberini in Roma (1634); or in the Palazzo Ducale in Milano (1598). As large as the largest in Parma it probably was not; nor so small as the Teatro in the Collegio Romano. Still "a magnificent opera" means from Evelyn something, a great deal more than what we moderns call "private theatricals." The theatres built for princes in the first half of the seventeenth century were erected as a rule in their palaces, not added on to them at one side as an after-thought, and were carefully considered pieces of work. There was nothing haphazard about them, nothing in the nature of makeshift. Already in 1545 Serlio had brought out his second volume of Architecture in which he had clearly stated in words, and shown by diagrams, how a theatre should be built, how a stage was to be constructed, and how the matter of scenes and lighting could be dealt with. In 1614, Chiaramonte had already written his book, which was to be published later in 1675.¹

In 1618-19 the Private Teatro of Duke Farnese was put up by Aleotti. In 1652 Tacca builds the Pergola for Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany, and the Teatro Spelta is, by 1654, in position in Modena, placed there by the famous Vigarani who five years later goes to Paris to erect the *Salle des Machines* in the Tuileries. (Fig. 2.)

And thus when F. Carini Motta comes out with his treatise on theatre building in 1676, thirty years before Evelyn's death, the whole question has been practically solved. (Plate 10.)

So we must remember that the theatres that Evelyn saw in 1644-46 were no early improvised attempts to make the best of a bad job, such as the French and English

¹ Furtenbach in 1628 and Sabbattini in 1637 bring out books on this subject. Although Furtenbach is the earlier of the two, I think Sabbattini is probably more important. (See *The Mask* for translation and designs.)



665. PALAZZO MANCINI (ACCD. DEGLI UMORISTI).

Part of the Pianta di Roma (Nolli), 1748.

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architects were still making at that time, but Italian buildings intended for a serious and definite purpose; and that purpose the housing of Drama (both prose and lyric) in the very best possible way, arrived at without haste, without delays, without thought of cost: and without the opposition of that intolerable Puritanism which considers that all things, even faces, are best when plain.

Before leaving Roma, Evelyn circles round it like a bird ere it swings away to its destination. He calls at the great house built for Cardinal Scipio Borghese at Mondragone. (Plate 11.) "We went hence to another house and garden not far distant, on the side of a hill called Mondragone, finished by Cardinal Scipio Borghese, an ample and kingly edifice. It has a very long gallery, and at the end a theatre for pastimes, spacious courts, rare grots, vineyards, olive-grounds, groves and solitudes."—TIVOLI, *Friday, 5 May, 1645.*

Then at Tivoli in the Villa d'Este he notes that most theatrical model "of Rome as it was in its beauty, of small models, representing that city, with its amphitheatres, naumachia, thermae, temples, etc."

Thursday, 18 May, 1645, Evelyn leaves Roma. He goes through Caprarola, dines there, and gets to Monte Rossi, "twenty miles from Rome," by night; next day is at Viterbo, dines there, and on to St. Lorenzo; next day, Saturday the 20th, at Radicofani and on to Turnera.

On Sunday, the 21st, he is in Siena, where he dines; then on to Pisa; back to Leghorn, where he is obliged to go for some money to pay the expenses of the rest of his journey. Then on to Lucca, where he stops to note that ". . . the inhabitants are exceedingly civil to strangers, above all places in Italy, and they speak the purest Italian."—LUCCA, 21 May, 1645

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And this every visitor to Lucca must have discovered for himself. Even the President Dupaty in 1785 seems to have come under the charm of one of these people.¹

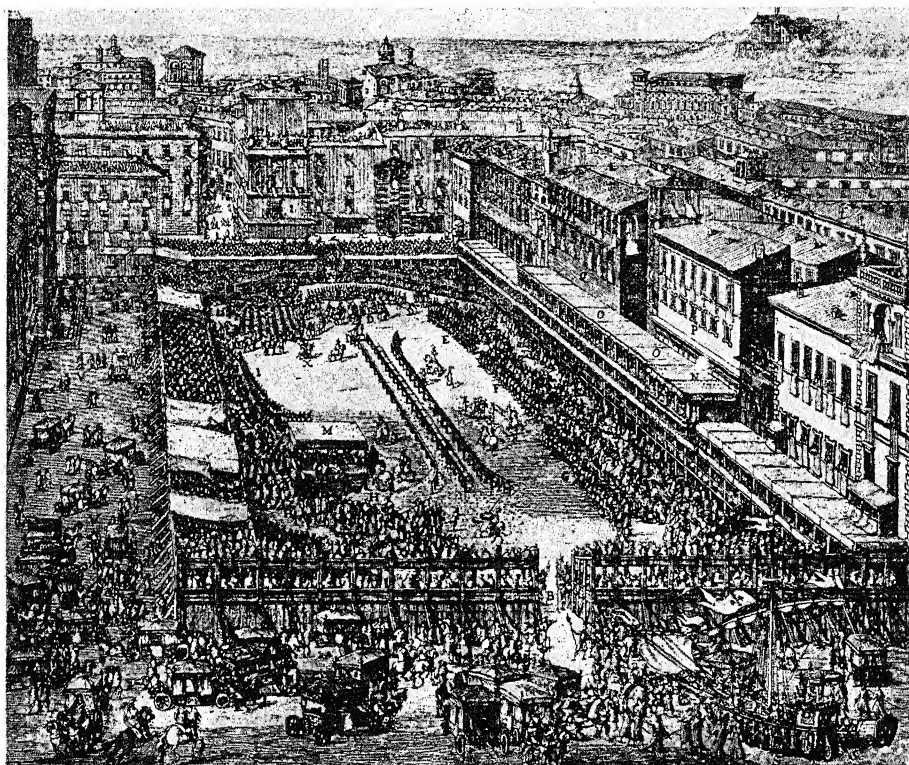
In Lucca he does not linger to note anything about the theatre, although he could have heard a musical drama at the Palla Corda in the Palazzo dei Borghi.

Nor does he stop for entertainment at any of the cities between Lucca and Venezia. It is to Venezia he hastens, and so we do not hear what he thought of the Teatro Gustavillani in Bologna, built by Seghizzi in 1640, a theatre with a new idea in it, an idea to be later adopted by the Bibiena family in the theatres in Verona and Mantova (Plates 12*a* and *b*), and in the Falcone Theatre in Genova (Plates 13 and 14) by some architect at present unknown.

Still Evelyn does make one note on his way to Venezia. It is while stopping for a moment or two in Firenze that he records the existence of the Ducal Theatre in the Palace which is now the Uffizi Gallery.² The best engraving to be found, showing this theatre, is the design of 1616 by Jacques Callot (Plate 15). "Then, passing the Old Palace, which has a very great hall for feasts and comedies, the roof rarely painted, and the side walls with six very large pictures representing battles, the works of Gio. Vassari."

¹ "Farewell, Lucca!—Adieu to M.R. . . ., and adieu to Liberty! but farewell chiefly to thee, Theresa M. . . .; for it is only thee, Theresa M., that one quits, in departing from Lucca!"—*Sentimental Letters on Italy*, Dupaty. Trans. 1789. London.

² The Teatro Ducale was built in 1583 by the architect, B. Buontalenti, and is sometimes called Teatro de' Medici. One year later the more academic theatre at Vicenza is built by Palladio. Compare the two designs, Plates 18 and 19. Palladio thinks too long about it all and arrives at less than Buontalenti achieves; and look how much Callot adds to the whole movement towards theatre construction. By this one etching, I find Callot does more to bring about the modern horse-shoe form than anyone else. How valuable is a little touch of inspiration! and here comes Callot into the Medicean theatre in 1616, and, seeing that the people curve the floor to make room for the performers, he emphasises this fine curve, and fixes it once and for all in a lovely etching with such a way about it that everyone buys a copy. It is in 1616, and slowly it enters the brains of the architects that exactly



FESTA GIVEN IN THE PIAZZA NAVONA, ROMA, 25TH FEB. 1632.

FROM A PLATE ENGRAVED BY F. COLLIGNON.

Evelyn saw the Piazza as it is shown here if we omit the temporary Teatro. In this Teatro we see a "Barriera" being performed on a scale worthy of a great city. The inventor of the Teatro and the big ship seen in the right hand corner was Francesco Guitti of Ferrara.

Explanation of the above Plate.

A. and B. Two entrances of Teatro. C. Position of the Mantenitore. D. Troop of four captive kings. E. Troop of Romans. F. Troop of Provenzali. G. Troop of Romans detta la Pertinace. H. Troop of Egyptians. I. Troop of Scythians. L. Palace of Duke Giov. Ant. Orsini. M. Box of the Judges. N. Box of Princess D. Anna Colonna. O. Box of the Ladies. P. Palace of the Millini. Q. Palace of the Prince of Massa. R. Marchese Malatesta Master of the Field. S. The Vascello or Boat. T. Don Prospero Colonna. V. Church of San Jacomo delle Spagnuoli. X. Cardinal Barberini's Dwarf.

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Now Evelyn quickens his pace. Off to Scarperia, up and over the Apennines, down to Firenzuola, that tiny and pleasant town in the form of a cross; through Pianura, Scargalasino, Loiano, and, after a rest at Bologna, on to Ferrara, to Corbua by boat, past Chioza and Palestina and Malamocco, and at last he is in Venezia, where I am too as I write this.

"The journey from Rome to Venice," says he, "cost me seven pistoles and thirteen julios." What a fine man Evelyn is: would I were wealthy enough to stop to reckon what my trip has cost!

It is June when Evelyn arrives in this lovely place.

This is no city, it is no ordinary thing related to anything else upon earth. It is just another world, where this world seems not to have intruded, except when Bonaparte came and fell with all the grace with which even a conqueror can fall; leaving the place as it was, unchanged, unaltered, so mysteriously powerful is its spirit.

I was looking to-day for some small recognition of Bonaparte's visit. I suppose I have not looked long enough. I imagine I shall find some little Venetian statue raised to him in one of the little side streets; and some acknowledgment of his refraining from doing what every conqueror does elsewhere, stripping the place, burning, pillaging, ruining its beauty.¹

About the sixth day after his arrival in Venezia, Evelyn is taken to a theatre, the Teatro Novissimo,² and which,

this curve is pretty fine; and for good or ill they follow the lines of the etching in their future ground plans, the first being 1627 in Bologna so far as I have been able to trace the thing, and the second—in Roma—at the Tor di Nona Theatre in 1671—Specchi the architect. (Plate 16.)

¹ I am reminded that he carried off a gold horse or two—but compare Ypres for what he might have done: or Paris itself in 1871-2.

² Galvani tells us that we must not confound this Teatro Novissimo with another theatre of the same name built entirely of wood. This one which Evelyn went to was also known as the Teatro della Cavallerizza; Tassini says it was built in 1640.

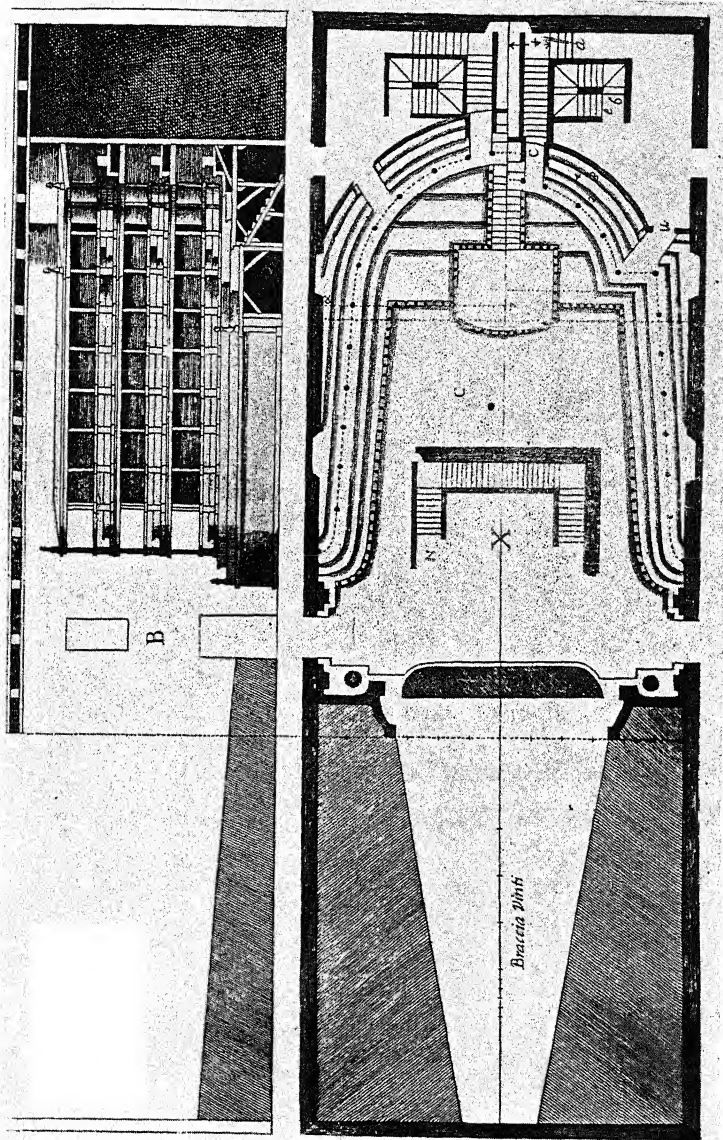
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since it was built in 1641, was then but four years old, and therefore in superb condition. It was demolished in 1647, so it was always "Novissimo."

The opera *Ercole in Lidia* by Conte M. Bisaccioni and Giov. Rovetta is being performed, and Evelyn goes to hear it with Lord Bruce, first Earl of Elgin.

The details of the evening's entertainment are given in the Diary, and seem to have been enjoyable. "This night, having with my Lord Bruce¹ taken our places before, we went to the Opera, where comedies and other plays are represented in recitative music, by most excellent musicians, vocal and instrumental, with variety of scenes painted and contrived with no less art of perspective, and machines for flying in the air, and other wonderful notions; taken together, it is one of the most magnificent and expensive diversions the wit of man can invent. The history was *Hercules in Lydia*; the scenes changed thirteen times. The famous voices, Anna Rencia, a Roman, and reputed the best treble of women; but there was an eunuch who, in my opinion, surpassed her; also a Genoese that sung an incomparable bass. This held us by the eyes and ears until two in the morning, when we went to the Ghetto de san Felice, to see the noblemen and their ladies at basset, a game at cards which is much used; but they play not in public, and all that have inclination to it are in masquerade, without speaking one word, and so they come in, play, lose or gain, and go away as they please. This time of licence is only in Carnival and this Ascension Week; neither are their theatres open for that other magnificence, or for ordinary comedians, save on these solemnities, they being a frugal and wise

¹It was another Lord Bruce who in 1827 collected for Ebers of the King's Theatre a number of dancers in Paris for the London Ballet. The Bruces seem to have been fond of theatricals.



DESIGN FOR A COURT THEATRE, MANTOVA, 1676.
(F. C. Motta, Arch.). See page 22.

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people, and exact observers of all sumptuary laws.”¹—
VENICE, *May-June*, 1645.

So much for Venezia in 1645. Venezia in April, 1922, is, in such matters, rather different. On the walls are big placards announcing the great attraction at some vast cinema hall: “Le Tre Illusioni: Illusione dell’oro, Illusione dell’amore, Illusione della felicità.”

Conceive the astonishment of any seventeenth-century gentleman, on coming to this city of realised dreams, at being met with such a piece of sceptical audacity, such awful fibs. For with all due respect to the value of shadows, it is the light which creates them, and gold, love, and happiness are no illusions. The only illusion is the mind of the ass who finds them so. This ordinary piece of knowledge was familiar to the Venetians in 1645, and why modern Venetians should have found it amusing or necessary to spoil their city by becoming sceptical, like those who live in the north-east of Europe, I cannot say. The liars who make money in this way (the cinema merchants are liars when they placard the towns with this rubbish) would in 1645 have been called before the Council of Ten and quietly removed in a sack as dangerous to the Republic. Why not to-day?² Why should we see no danger in such fearful cynicism doled out to a credulous public, which is made to pay and suffer for such wretched lies?

“We do,” you say. Then why tolerate it? “It pays us,” you answer. “Then *buona notte*.”

“The scenes changed thirteen times,” says Evelyn, and “this opera held us by the eyes and ears till two in the morning.” Meantime in England, the Protector Crom-

¹ It is Evelyn who writes “Venice” instead of “Venezia,” and “Padua,” “Rome” and “Florence” instead of “Padova,” “Roma” and “Firenze.” I leave his spelling as I find it.

² Since I wrote this, Signor Mussolini has come into power. He may probably turn his attention, in good time, to the lies of the cinema.

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well was preventing our stage from developing, while building ships with portraits of himself in wood at the prow, and a Fame holding the laurel wreath over his insulting head, with the words "God with us."¹ "Gott mit Uns," then, is not so new after all, nor so German as we were led to believe.

He slips over to Padova for a brief visit, and one day, "After dinner we walked to the Palace of Foscari all'Arena, there remaining yet some appearances of an ancient theatre, though serving now for a court only before the house."—
PADUA, 1645.

He now plies to and fro between Venezia and Padova. In Padova, he could have seen the new Teatro delle Stallone, the only theatre of the place and built in 1642. He was there long enough, but it is quite likely that, during his visit, nothing was being performed; at least I can find no records of any performances at that teatro between 1642 and about 1651. The outside of the theatre can be very clearly seen in an engraving by Canaletto which shows the Stallone del Prato della Valle.

20 January, 1646, is a Saturday, and Signor Francesco da Molin is elected doge of Venezia, and at Shrovetide Evelyn runs back to Venezia and witnesses three more operas and other things, and once more hears his enchanting Anna Rencia sing, and what is more, in true 1880 style, asks her out to supper. One almost sees an eyeglass, a top-hat, and the Gaiety stage-door.

Here is Evelyn's entry: ". . . The great banks are set up for those who will play at basset; the comedians have liberty, and the operas are open; witty pasquils are thrown about, and the mountebanks² have their stages at every corner (Plate 17). The diversions which

¹ *Evelyn's Diary*, 9 April, 1655.

² Coryat gives a fuller account of these mountebanks.

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chiefly took me up was three noble operas,¹ where were excellent voices and music, the most celebrated of which was the famous Anna Rencia,² whom we invited to a fish-dinner after four days in Lent, when they had given over at the theatre. Accompanied with an eunuch whom she brought with her, she entertained us with rare music, both of them singing to a harpsichord. It growing late, a gentleman of Venice came for her, to show her the galleys, now ready to sail for Candia. This entertainment produced a second, given us by the English consul of the merchants, inviting us to his house, where he had the Genoese,³ the most celebrated bass in Italy, who was one of the late opera-band. This diversion held us so late at night, that, conveying a gentlewoman who had supped with us to her gondola at the usual place of landing, we were shot at by two carbines from another gondola, in which were a noble Venetian and his courtesan unwilling to be disturbed, which made us run in and fetch other weapons, not knowing what the matter was, till we were informed of the danger we might incur by pursuing it farther.”—VENICE, *Shrovetide*, 1646.

He leaves for Padova, after one last glimpse of Venezia, and then he makes for home, going slowly through Vicenza, Verona and Brescia; avoiding Parma, Piacenza, Mantova, and that whole route from a fear of banditti (for, even in 1646, “every day, people say, there’s a robbery in the park”), making for Milano in a roundabout way.

¹ Evelyn does not give the name of these three noble operas, but we know from Dr. Antonio Groppo’s list of Venetian performances exactly which theatres were open in 1645 and 1646, and what was being performed in each. The theatres which are open in 1645 are the Teatro San Cassiano, Teatro SS. Giovanni e Paolo, and the Teatro Novissimo. The theatres which are open in 1646 are the Teatro SS. Giovanni e Paolo, and the Teatro Novissimo.

² A writer in *Notes and Queries* (1922) tells us that four years later (1650) Anna Rencia married Alessandro Leardini d’Urbino. Leardini was part composer of Rovetta’s opera *Argiope*, produced 1649 at Teatro SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venezia.

³ This Genoese I have, so far, been unable to trace, spite of his being “the most celebrated in Italy.”

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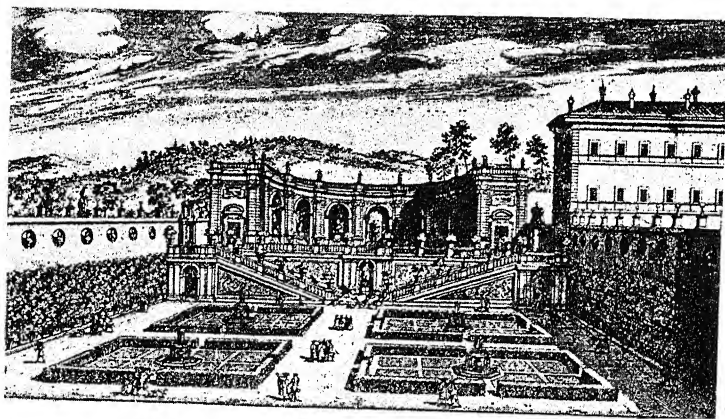
And these banditti had no right to rob us of the records Evelyn would have left us of the Teatro Farnese in Parma and the Teatro di Corte in Mantova had he entered these towns.

Still, at Vicenza he halts to tell us about the Teatro Olimpico (Plates 18 and 19). What he tells us is not quite as exact as usual. He is in Vicenza about Tuesday, 27 March. "The next morning we visited the theatre, as being of that kind the most perfect now standing, and built by Palladio, in exact imitation of the ancient Romans, and capable of containing 5000 spectators. The scene, which is all of stone, represents an imperial city, the order Corinthian, decorated with statues. Over the Scenario is inscribed, *Virtuti ac Genio Olympior: Academia Theatrum hoc à fundamentis erexit Paladio Architect: 1584*. The scene declines eleven feet, the *soffitto* painted with clouds. To this there joins a spacious hall for solemn days to ballot in, and a second for the Academics."¹

Evelyn errs about this theatre built by Palladio because, though he is giving more time to Italy than Coryat gave, he is not giving quite enough time, nor paying quite enough attention to Vicenza. In this, he is courteous to me, for if he had made no mistakes, how could I show off my scrap of knowledge?

He notes with precision little facts about the basset-playing, for he has given time to it; and he is correct about Miss Rencia (except for the way he spells her name), for he had also paid *her* attention; but, of the Teatro Olimpico, he is incorrect in saying that it is "an exact imitation of the ancient Romans," and that it can contain "5000 spectators," and that the scene is "all of stone."

¹ The stage slope, the perspective, the *soffitto* or ceiling, can be seen in Plate 18; the spacious hall in Plate 19.



PALAZZO MONDRAGONE, FRASCATI.

Showing garden and theatre. From an engraving by Rainaldi (1611-1614).
See page 23.

ITALY

It is an imitation of nothing, and although the works of Vitruvio have been well studied by Palladio, the Italian has made his theatre indoors, more than half of it with wood and stucco, and has somehow or other managed to avoid all the essentials and most of the details of a good Roman theatre. The *gradinata*, or flight of steps, on which the spectators sit, is taken from Serlio and others of that time, who experimented in theatre building. The idea of separate chairs for each spectator, and boxed-in places for groups of four to eight, had not occurred to anyone; and in this, just so far and no further, is Palladio Roman. That he uses arches, pillars and statues to adorn his auditorium and stage, is no more Roman than Italian or Greek. What I would insist on is that Palladio did not set out to build a Roman theatre, but a Palladian theatre. Doubtless he spoke and wrote much of Vitruvio, but his whole aim was to create afresh, as freshly as was possible for him. Let us remember that he built this theatre for a large group of academicians obviously obsessed by the ancients and their fine but, even then, dusty way of doing things, doubtless forgetful of the pleasant trees and brooks, of Vicenza, and obsequious to the pushful princes of the year 1560. So the pedants, as usual, ruined another good thing. As for 5000 persons being able to sit and stand to see the play, we can place the number at 3000, and we shall still be on the side of those who want to prove it a larger theatre than it is, certainly larger than it looks.

The space it occupies is quite small, and the way in which the architect has used every inch of this space is interesting.

The scene is principally of wood, brick and stucco: very little stone is used. On the stage, we find stone up to the level of our hip, but this only in the proscenium. The

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seven streets shown in the plan (Plate 19) are of wood and stucco. I speak after examining them.

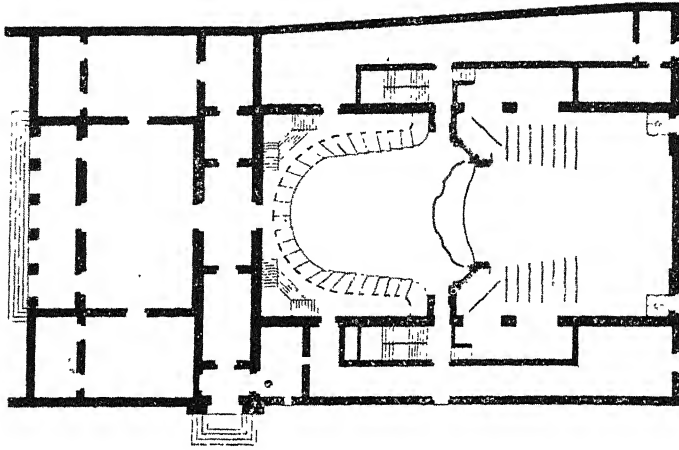
Patte, in 1830, writes in his *Storia e Descrizione* that "questo edificio non è costruito alla leggiera, ma in pietra bella"; and Milizia, 1768, Filippi, 1860, and Signorelli, 1813, indeed, most writers, seem for some unknown reason to be agreed that the scene is of stone or marble. This is all the more curious since Montenari, the best authority, had stated, in 1749, that "questi gradini nel Teatro Olimpico non sono di pietra . . . *ma sono di legname* . . . le scene del nostro Teatro sono scene stabili . . . disegnate *in legno*, e rilevate, e a vari colori dipinte."¹

Evelyn then goes to Verona where "The first thing that engaged our attention and wonder, too, was the amphitheatre, which is the most entire of ancient remains now extant. The inhabitants call it the Arena (Plate 20): it has two porticos, one within the other, and is thirty-four rods long, twenty-two in breadth, with forty-two ranks of stone benches, or seats, which reach to the top. The vastness of the marble stones is stupendous. 'L. V. Flaminus, Consul anno urb. con. LIII.' This I esteem to be one of the noblest antiquities in Europe, it is so vast and entire, having escaped the ruins of so many other public buildings for over 1400 years."

And now, in May, he comes to Milano, which he speaks of as "a sweet place," and which at this time contained 40,000 inhabitants. Here he sees an opera. "This afternoon," he writes, "we were wholly taken up in seeing an opera represented by some Neapolitans, performed all in

¹ Translated: "These step-seats (*gradini*) of the Olympic Theatre are not of stone . . . but are of wood . . . the scenes of our Theatre are fixed scenes . . . designed in wood and relief (in plaster) and painted in various colours."

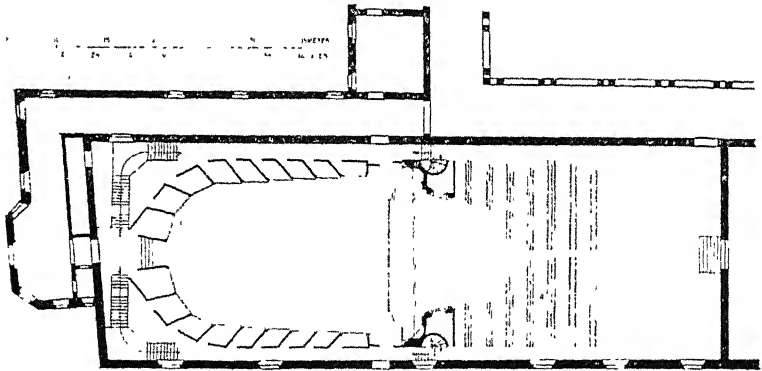
Evelyn has wrong even the inscription over the "Scenario" (as he calls it): the exact one being: VIRTUTI AC GENIO OLYMPICORUM ACADEMIA TEATRUM HOC A FUNDAMENTIS EREXIT ANN. MDLXXXIII. PALADIO ARCHIT. (*Il Forestiere istruito, etc.* O. B. Scamozzi, 1761.)



TEATRO FILARMONICO, VERONA.

Designed and built by Francesco Bibiena, 1716. (Compare plates 12b, 13 and 14.)
See page 24.

PLATE 12B.



TEATRO DUCALE NUOVO, MANTOVA, FERDINANDO BIBIENA, 1706.

This and the previous plate must be compared carefully with the two following plates. In each of these three theatres, at Mantova, Verona, and Genova, an idea invented by Seghizzi the architect about the year 1640 is put into practice. That idea was to advance each *palco* or box a trifle in front of the one which preceded it, and to raise the floor of each box about 2 to 5 inches. This theatre was destroyed in 1781, but the examples in Verona and in Genova are still standing. The Verona theatre was burnt in 1749, and Arch. Pozzo was called in to reconstruct it. He followed the original design by Bibiena. This Seghizzi notion seems to have been tried more than three times, for an idea is not scouted by the Italians hastily—neither is it tried out feebly but very thoroughly. Whether the idea is, or was, of great worth I cannot say, but as employed in the Teatro Falcone in Genova it is very delightful. See page 24.

ITALY

excellent music with rare scenes, in which there acted a celebrated beauty."

Now what was this opera, where performed, and who the beauty? Of the place, all I have been able to discover is that at this time there were only three theatres. One was in the Ducal Palace, and one in the house of Messer Angelo Lucchese in Via Rastelli, and one in a house "degli Incarnatini" near Porta Tosa. It is the actor Francesco Andreini who, in 1624, refers to this last theatre in his *Bravure del Capitano Spavento* (Venezia).

In a manuscript plan of the Ducal Palace 1708 (Plate 21) and in another portion of a plan of Milano (*circa* 1740) (Plate 22) we see marked clearly in the palace two theatres; one for opera, that in Via Rastelli, the famous and well-known building of which some few drawings and engravings exist; the other, a smaller building at the other corner of the palace and near the Duomo. The first court theatre (whichever one of these it was) was built in 1598; I believe it to have been the smaller of the two. It was about sixty braccias in length and about sixteen to twenty braccias wide. In 1740 it was considered useless, but it still stood and was even in place in 1763. All the historians seem to have overlooked this theatre. The larger teatro was burnt to the ground in 1708, and a part of the palace damaged as seen in Plate 21, where the fringe (painted red in the original drawing) indicates the extent of the fire.

To discover who was "the celebrated beauty" we must enquire as to what actress-singer was then living. Isabella Andreini of the "Fideli" company died in 1604, so it could not have been she. In May, 1605, the company of the "Uniti" seemed to have received permission from Don Juan Fernandez de Velasco Condestable of Castaglia to perform in Milano. In May, 1646, a like permission was granted to some company by the same Condestable.

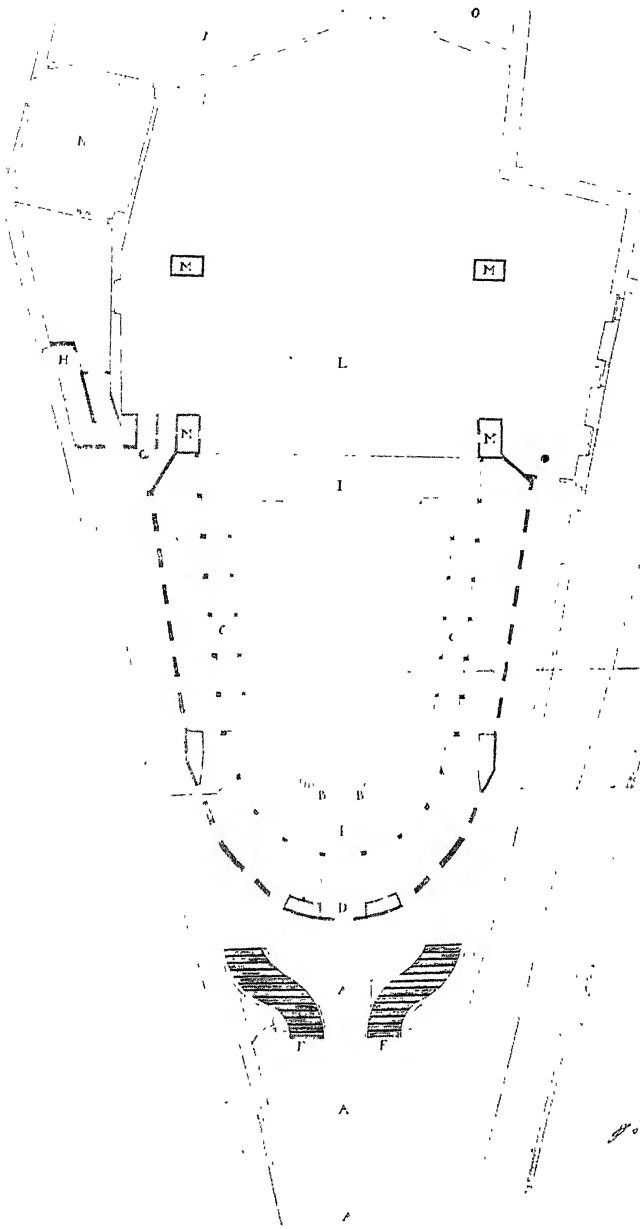
JOHN EVELYN

In 1646, on Monday the 30th of April, their actor Buffetto and the actress Diana were in the state of Milano, passing with their baggage, and four or five persons with them, through to Paris.

Was Diana the "celebrated beauty"? Let him who has any beauty to spare waste twenty years hunting for what is absolutely of no importance. I hear Evelyn calling,—he is off,—he is bidding farewell to Italy.

He is obliged to leave Milano rather hurriedly, owing to an incident which he describes admirably, but which, as it has nothing to do with the Theatre, I will not linger behind to recall. He is galloping out of the gates. I catch him up at Castellanza and we go sorrowfully out of this pleasant land, stopping but a moment or two at Arona, Isola Bella and Margazza; where poor Evelyn, unable to get a horse, is obliged to straddle an ass, which he bridles with a valuable "Turkish bridle woven with silk and curiously embossed with other silk trappings"—a present from a gentleman, a great horseman, in Milano.

Thus mounted, he leaves Italy forever. But as you will see when he reaches Paris and London, and is obliged to listen to singing and to look at acting in these places, he is always well-nigh silent. . . . It was so beautiful in Roma, and in Venezia more beautiful still: the fine Italian speech at the *Umoristi* in Roma . . . the noble opera in Venezia . . . the voice of Anna Rencia . . . he seems to be thinking of all these as he goes upward out of Italy into the mountains on the caparisoned ass.



- A. Entrance leading to the pit.
- B. Staircases leading up to the raised side gangways.
- C. Side gangways.
- D. Entrance for il Serenissimo Principe.
- E. The Prince's place.
- F. Staircases leading to the first tier of boxes.
- G. Staircase leading to the second tier of boxes.
- H. Staircase leading to the Pollaro or gallery.
- I. Orchestra.
- L. Stage.
- M. Pillars supporting proscenium and roof over stage.
- N. Appartements of the musicians.
- O. Dressing-room.

TEATRO FALCONE, GENOVA.

Begun by G. Angelo Falcone in 1650, completed by Carlo Fontana—in-
augurated in 1652 or 1653. (This Fontana it was who built the first Teatro Tor
di Nona in Roma, 1660.) The Teatro Falcone was demolished and rebuilt in
1702, and inaugurated in 1705. From the original drawing in the Biblioteca
Nazionale, Torino. In this design there is one box less shown on each side
than in the plans kept in Genoa. I have counted the boxes in the building
itself, and I count eleven on each side as in this Torino plan. See page 24.

PART THREE

AFTER ITALY

AFTER a tedious journey, through Switzerland, during which he was laid up for five weeks with the small-pox, Evelyn arrives at Paris in October, 1646;¹ but only to fall sick again in May, to lose all his clothes and plate, to recover them, and to set his affections on the daughter of Sir Richard Browne, a knight who had aided him to recover the lost items. He is married to her on Thursday, 27 June, 1647.

Then off to England alone, to Hampton Court, "where I had the honour to kiss His Majesty's hand . . . he being now in the power of those execrable villains who not long after murdered him." This has little to do with the Theatre, except that every good theatre-goer is, one supposes, always a Royalist, and all good Royalists (one may suppose) love and support their Theatre.

On Wednesday, 5th February, 1648, Evelyn goes to the Cockpit Theatre. "5th February saw a tragi-comedy acted in the Cockpit, after there had been none of these diversions for many years during the war."

Already earlier in the year, on Wednesday, 22 January, the Houses of Lords and Commons had issued an order "suppressing all stage-plays, and taking down all their boxes, stages and seats, in the several houses where the said plays are usually acted" (Collier); but nothing had happened until other orders were issued, and the offending

¹ In 1646 Stefano della Bella is engraving his view of Paris showing the Pont Neuf. So this is precisely to a year how the city looked as Evelyn trots in, presumably, on a horse. (Plate 23.)

performers whipped, or sent to the Militia: then the theatres were silenced for many a year, in fact until Charles the King was brought back to his kingdom.

On Friday, 28 August, Evelyn went "to London . . . and saw the celebrated follies of Bartholomew Fair."

On Thursday, 17 December, "I heard an Italian sermon, in the Mercers' Chapel, one Dr. Middleton . . . preaching." I sit with poor Evelyn through this, and at every "perché" of the preacher, I too echo "why" . . . why indeed! Why are we here, Evelyn amidst a lot of moral butchers bent on murdering a king in about a month from now; why are we here to listen to the sweet Italian speech used for most damnable Puritanical purposes? Of course they preach in Italy too, but there the language is fierce, or sweet, as when used in opera. Why stay so still in your pew, old friend, listening to those sounds?

In fact, Evelyn stays a very short while in pew or in London. He departs for Paris, getting there in July. One day, in Paris, he crosses the Pont Neuf (Plates 23 and 24), strolls down to the corner of the Rue Harlai à la Rose Rouge, where dwells and works Abraham Bosse, the engraver, who has given us a few designs of actors costumed magnificently, among them the "Captain" of the old Comedy.

"I went to that excellent engraver, Du Bosse, for his instruction about some difficulties in perspective which were delivered in his book."—PARIS, 28 *December*, 1649.

It was just a year previously (1648) that Abraham du Bosse had issued his "*Manière universelle de M. Desargues, pour pratiquer la perspective par petit-pied comme le Géometral, etc.*," an octavo in two volumes, containing a very finely engraved series of plates which illustrate the treatise. In it was a very remarkable portrait of a M. Michel Larcher, a portrait which I always find

perfect. So full of life, so admirable, the sitter; so free from all flourish, the designer. "That is the man I should like most to have made a portrait of me," is what I always feel on looking at the engraving, a plate of only $5\frac{3}{8}$ by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and thinking of the life-size things in oil which result from "sitting for your portrait."

Early in the next year, Evelyn is looking at the "masquerados," as he calls them, and again his thoughts travel back to Italy. Doubtless then, as now, the French believed they excelled the Italians in these matters. Evelyn doesn't. Not that he finds them less fantastic, oh no—not that—but see where he touches the very spot. "I went to see the masquerados, which was very fantastic; but nothing so quiet and solemn as I found it in Venice." *Eccola! Nothing so quiet and solemn as at Venice!* A masquerade quiet and solemn—how is that possible? Some there are in England and America who know about masquerades, who have seen the Russian Ballet, and have been to the Chelsea Arts Ball, the Quatres Arts Ball and the other to-dos, and who know that a masquerade cannot be quiet and solemn. You and I and Evelyn can hug our delusion to ourselves; and we shall not even have that delightful young man, Philippe Monnier, with us. He has written of a later Venezia than Evelyn saw, and has summed it all up as being "happy." Venezia—happy; what an unhappy choice of a word.

But then the delightful Monnier is one who responds best to all that is happy; and so he dances into Venezia, and all that dances and sings in his imagination begins to emerge from the dark *calles* and little nooks, and soon he has collected a little crowd of happy facts around him. These he photographs and calls it Venezia in the eighteenth century. But it is not Venezia in any century, it is but the shred of its cloak.

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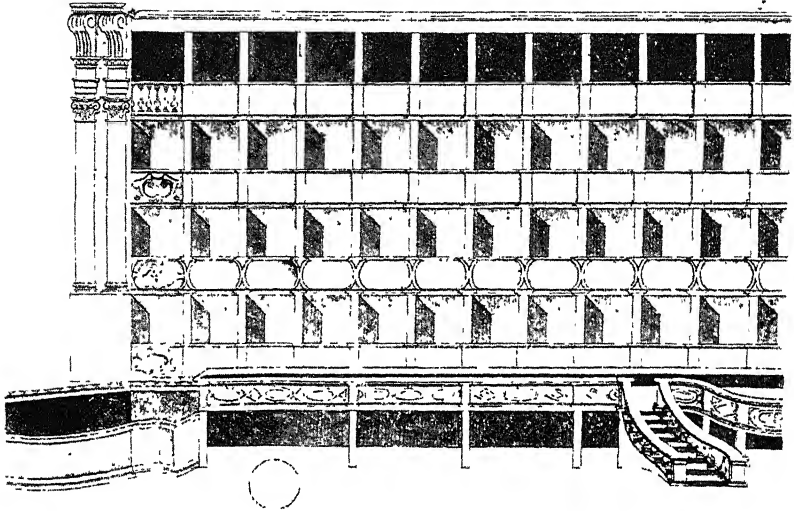
To come to know Italy even as well as those who have come a little nearer to her, is to learn at least that, when she laughs and chatters, it is always "so quiet and solemn," even as Evelyn found it in Venezia in the seventeenth century.

On Monday, 20 March, 1651, he is surprised by a puppet-play. When Evelyn is surprised it is fair proof that something is out of place or tune or time. "I went this night with my wife to a ball at the Marquis de Crevecœur's, where were divers Princes, Dukes, and great persons; but what appeared to me very mean was, that it began with a puppet-play."

Something was decidedly wrong with these puppets on this evening, for as a rule Evelyn delights in them; and only someone who has not seen the puppets well performed will say that it was Evelyn who was out of joint on this evening, for, as we know, it is impossible to remain surly for long when you can see the puppets dallying.

On Saturday, 6 May, he witnesses the dancing of the King of France. "I attended the Ambassador to a masque at Court, where the French King in person danced five entries; but being engaged in discourse, and better entertained with one of the Queen-Regent's Secretaries, I soon left the entertainment." Things are out of joint with him indeed, and it is clearer than ever that it was not the puppets of 20 March who were in fault.

The piece in which Louis XIV. danced for the first time in public was the *Masque of Cassandre*, and it was performed in 1651. Evelyn does not inform us if this was the name of the masque he saw. Louis XIV. was then thirteen years old, and he continued to appear on the stage until 1670, dancing in twenty-seven grand ballets and many *intermezzi* to the delight of the Court, and in



TEATRO FALCONE, GENOVA.

At the side of this drawing, which is in the archives at Torino, is written, "Dal suolo delle banche sino alla cornice sopra il Pollaro vi e' Palmi 41," or "From the floor of the pit to the cornice over the *Pollaro* (or hen-house) it is 41 palms." The gallery of a Teatro was rather cramped, and possibly the people craned out their necks and thus suggested to ribald masons and carpenters the name of hen-house, or hen-coop. It was sometimes called *Columbia*, and sometimes *Pigeonera*.

See page 24.

AFTER ITALY

accordance with the old Italian tradition, which evidently held that the better the doer, the better the deed. But Evelyn soon left the room; he is a little restless in Paris. To him, Louis XIV. dances not so well as the men in Venezia; but then, he is somewhere in the background, to judge from his own words, somewhere in the shade with a secretary.

Five days later, being obliged to attend another masque at Court, the Master of the Ceremonies gets hold of him and, giving him a good seat, gets a good notice, as we say nowadays. The following is the clipping: "To the Palace Cardinal, where the Master of the Ceremonies placed me to see the Royal masque, or opera. The first scene represented a chariot of singers composed of the rarest voices that could be procured, representing Cornaro¹ and Temperance; this was overthrown by Bacchus and his revellers; the rest consisted of several entries, and pageants of excess, by all the elements. A masque representing fire was admirable; then came a Venus out of the clouds. The conclusion was a Heaven, whither all ascended. But the glory of the masque was the great persons performing in it, the French King, his brother the Duke of Anjou, with all the grandees of the Court, the King performing to the admiration of all. The music was twenty-nine violins, vested *à l'antique*, but the habits of the masquers were stupendously rich and glorious."—PARIS, 11 May, 1651.

And now Evelyn is packing his trunks so as to get away from France for ever, "intending no more to go out of England." By Thursday, 21 December, he is booking his ticket, on Monday, 29 January, 1652, he sails.

Evelyn's travels have now come to an end, and he may

¹ Lodovico Cornaro was born in Venezia in 1467; died in Padova in 1566, and wrote his *Discorsi della vita sobria*, 1558.

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now become a second Pepys, as soon as he will. He may even forestall him, for Pepys had not yet begun to write his Diary.¹ He may potter around and interweave the Pepysian patter into his potterings, as he lingers on the street corner to note Nell Gwynne imagining that she represents the Theatre; unaware that all she represents is a pretty vignette to a chapter of the English stage. He may hustle and bustle and get into a seat in the pit and see King Charles leaning over from his box and toying with Lady Castlemaine in the next box. He may enter this into his Diary and cause us to feel that it was all very fine in those days in the English Theatre, because *at last* the continental trick has been caught, and can be done any night as well as they do it in those foreign parts. In fact, he may become local, parochial, as soon as he likes. But Evelyn does not like, and so to the end he remains an Englishman quite aware of England's value, and so quite unable to be chatty about the grand city of London.

Evelyn is thirty-two years old. At twenty-one he had begun his travels, and now, after eleven delightful years, he comes home, bringing with him a good deal that is valuable for his country to use, and which it uses.

He returns to find the traitor Cromwell affecting kingship, and all England smugly content with the damnable nonsense. But he also returns to speak with those who have decided to stand the nonsense no longer. Charles II. has been signalled; the good days are coming. England is about to be herself again. Bonfires will be lit; shouts will be raised; the doors of theatres will be flung open again; something splendid will re-enter England, bringing with it that larger and more natural ease on which all her old perfections shall sit so well once more.

But all that was only a dream; never was it to be.

¹ *Pepys' Diary* began 1659, ended 1669.



TEATRO DUCALE IN FIRENZE, 1616.

Engraving by Callot. Production by Giulio Parigi in whose studio Callot was then studying. See page 24.

AFTER ITALY

The illusion of it was to take its place for a while; all was to look shining, but never again was England to be quite herself.

To kill a king is bad, to allow him to be killed is worse. . . .

What sort of prowlers, what kind of tight-lipped persons, had brought about that most noble Stuart's fall? Who had severed his kingly head from his royal shoulders? Rigid Puritans, perhaps, or fierce enemies? No; false friends. And now, though many of these, so moral, gentlemen are dead, others still wait—prowling in the sun on the highways, or on the bench.—Peers and vagabonds, most of them: Sir Henry This, and Sir Walter That.

They wait for Charles the Second. They intend to bring him up, or bring him down. Gadzooks, one would imagine 'em to be a pack of old women; so keen are they on the educating of this piece of humanity, and a king into the bargain.

They failed to master him; for he was a smart lad, this Charles II.; but they managed for a time to turn his England into a laughing-stock for Europe; and he, in his person, had given them such a chance as it was never to have again—such a chance in style.

Evelyn is, before long, writing in his day-book, sad things for us to read.

He seems to me to be more of an Elizabethan than one of later date, the larger and more ordinary ideas seem to be his.

But it is the small and extraordinary ones which are gaining ground in London; and Cromwell's coming and going, in spite of his awful honesty, did nothing to make things larger.

The old-woman instinct, the water-drinking instinct, the hypocritical instinct, and a huge conceit, had begun

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to creep in under the skin of our men. They would not act and speak like men to their new charge; no, no; they would influence him, bring him up, master him, and so wreck England once more.

The present-day Theatre steps forward and replies for me with, "Please, this ignoramus is right." For the Theatre of to-day likes to bring people up too. It is bringing me up . . . possibly doing it backwards, who knows?

I know very little about Charles II. except that he is, and always will be, for me, the happy memory he is supposed to be. I know even less about Cromwell, but I know a good song when I hear it; I can tell a good actor before he speaks, and I know when I am comfortable; and to be in a big room where everyone else is at ease, and enjoying himself, is to me to be in the abode of the gods; and a certain wisdom generally haunts such easy-going places.

The Theatre is made especially for a man to be at his ease—to be happy—to see everyone else happy.

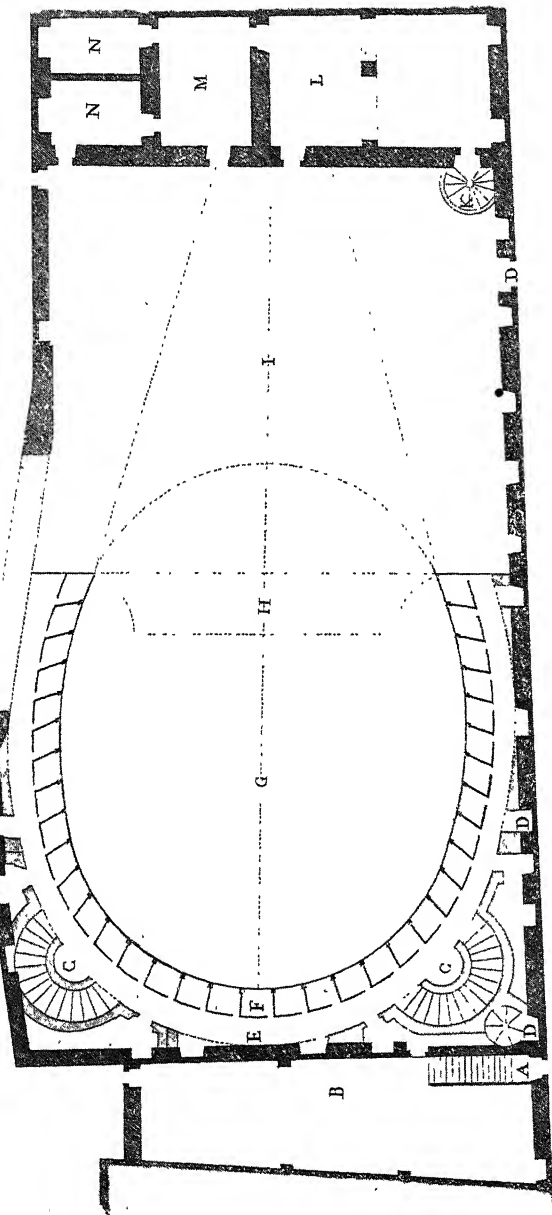
The Theatre, therefore, has a perfect right to assert that the writer is speaking sense, when he tells you that these old women-men of England wrecked her again in 1660, when Charles came home bent upon creating things.

The Theatre is not always a brothel, in spite of this opinion having been expressed by the manager of a theatre in Zola's *Nana*. But neither is it always a kind of church with a low pulpit; and it is not a place for too much talk.

It is magic ground, and it is neutral ground.

Just because of this, whatever happens there tastes good to the Public—until the Public comes to question it, inspect it with care as though it were a poison. Left alone—stage left alone, workers left alone, each spectator left alone, no meddling or interference one with the other, or

Parte corrispondente al Tevere



Planta del secondo Teatro, per altro il primo voluto per il lungo al via e si crede fatto dall'Architetto v. Massimiliano Specchi. Roman.

THE SECOND TEATRO TOR DI NONA, ROMA.

Built by Alessandro Specchi, 1671. Destroyed in 1697. (Compare Plate 15.)

This Teatro was burnt or destroyed and rebuilt or restored eight or nine times. In 1886 it was demolished to make room for the embankment of the river Tevere. There is an etching by Piranesi of the Ponte and Castello Sant Angelo which shows us the side of the Teatro. Frances Elliot in 1872 writes of a visit to this playhouse when it was called the Apollo ("Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy," chap. xi.). In 1785 the entire underpart of the stage could be transformed into a public bath, and the ceiling of the auditorium could be opened to admit the daylight; no signs that the eighteenth century was behind the times in theatre construction—rather a little in advance it seems to me. See page 25.

AFTER ITALY

any with the ordinary and ancient stage and its performers—and you get a great Theatre.

Begin meddling with us, and you render it, yourselves, and your nation—ridiculous. This is what the meddling did in 1660; what it tries to do now.

First of all, Sir Henry Herbert, censor of plays and players. If ever I met a smug, money-grabbing piece of virtue, without any goodness in him, it is Sir Henry as Censor and Master of the Revels. Sir Henry in office, I mean; for, doubtless, Sir Henry off on a spree was quite another story.¹ At work, at his self-imposed (and lucrative) task of curbing the licence of naughty persons, Sir Henry was a farce, and a dreary one into the bargain.

The first person whom he determined to curb was his gracious Majesty. Our King thought it would be a pleasant thing to restore to the Theatre some of its old magic. He saw himself on this neutral ground amongst his subjects all enjoying themselves.

If he could bring about that, he saw that England would not be half as much trouble to govern, as when everyone was on edge all the time, in every place, and for every reason, formal and stiff and done for.

So he favoured the idea of having an easy Theatre. Being the man he was, he was the last to want a licentious Theatre. The idea was repugnant to him. A man, I take it, who liked to see things in their right places, he wanted to see the old magic in the Theatre, the old common-sense in the Counting-House, the old virtue in the Church, and the "old woman" to the devil. Old ladies, old and fragile men, these he made provisions for; dear old ladies should have houses for nothing; everything should be in its right place.

¹ Not that Sir Henry ever went so far as to enjoy himself; I should hate to imply such a thing. Sir Henry could spree it without happiness—a rare man. "Is it a sin, mother, to go and bathe?" "No, my child, so long as you don't enjoy yourself." (Babinworth, *Chronicles*: 1914 reprint.)

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But he admitted by his eyebrows—they twitched surely—that he was damned puzzled that so many old women were managing his kingdom and making a mess of it; and all through their trying to be so infernally conscientious. Taking it for granted that he might do a little managing by himself, he granted D'Avenant and Killigrew patents to erect two magic theatres.

D'Avenant and Killigrew have with them the best actor of the age, Thomas Betterton. The King, who knows a good plate of fruit when he sees it, doesn't hesitate about this group of men. He had doubtless seen better actors in Paris, where the finest Italians were often visitors, but, back in England, he picks out our best men with an unerring instinct. Or rather, when they present themselves, he doesn't reject them because they don't look like priests and lisp like water-drinkers.

But Sir Henry Herbert is not going to stand it. He has been poking about with a fork in the plate of fruit, and has come upon a scandalous and unheard-of thing. One of the apples has a worm in it.

Like never taking very kindly to like (when not pretty), Sir Henry will reject the whole plate because this particular worm has discovered a sweeter lodging than he.

This, in a few words, is practically the first part of the story of the Restoration Theatre.

And see what follows. Sir Henry tells the lackey to "Put down that plate." The lackey does so. The sweet apples, pears, peaches, grapes, and nuts are now alone with Sir Henry and his purpose. He unlocks the drawer of his writing-desk, takes a pistol in one hand, rises, approaches the dish of fruit; without hesitation and with a courage which belongs to the foolhardy alone, he takes the plate of fruit, locks it up in a Spanish cabinet, puts the key in his pocket, and allows it to rot, to breed myriads

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of worms, to stench the whole of the neighbourhood, and then triumphantly points out its rottenness to his friends and relations.

Thus ends the story of the English Restoration Theatre.

Because certain incomplete men in England have for years utterly misunderstood the whole nature of the Theatre, and mankind's use for a theatre, England has been always without a real stage; that priceless spot in its neutral ground is built over. Killigrew, D'Avenant, Betterton, and King Charles were none of them particularly interested in any trifling innovations such as actresses, operas, perspective sceneries, and the like. But inasmuch as these trifles outraged the obstinate soul of Sir Henry Herbert and a dozen others, so did the pack who followed take up their cry: with such fervour that even ordinary people paused to listen and look, and, seeing something troubling, began also to trouble: and actresses, in spite of their having been a huge success in Italy (and a most ordinary one), become, in London, a scandal. And the actresses had to live up to their new-gained English reputation. So with the opera and the perspectives, and the other novelties: cried-out-at as though unheard of, they took on unheard-of attitudes.

Into this kind of England steps Evelyn. He had seen all these excellent things abroad; and he returns to find them considered eccentric and out-of-place: placed out-of-place by the Educationists, those hard, matter-of-fact, yet perfect, obstinates.

He straightway goes to see the works of Reeves. This is in 1652; but, until 1659, he has no chance of visiting any playhouses. For the usurper, Oliver Cromwell, had closed them, and they dared not disobey until he died, and the new usurper Richard Cromwell came into the remnants of power. Then the Theatre begins to stir.

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Meantime let us see what, in the interim, Evelyn comes across, which can, to some extent, be called *of the Theatre*. "I went to see some workmanship of the admirable artist, Reeves, famous for perspective" (1652).—"We all dined at that most obliging and universally curious Dr. Wilkins's, at Wadham College" (Oxford, 1654). ". . . he had also contrived an hollow statue, which gave a voice and uttered words, by a long concealed pipe that went to its mouth¹ whilst one speaks through it at a good distance." At Eltham (1656) "was shown me a pretty perspective, and well represented in a triangular box, the church of Haarlem in Holland, to be seen through a small hole at one of the corners, and contrived into a small handsome cabinet, it was so rarely done, that all the artists and painters in town flocked to see it." (Plate 25.)

All this is very little, and yet these playful things, these hollow statues, perspectives, triangular boxes, these theatrical properties and models have something in them; they at least lack the awful seriousness which forbids all that is playful to play, which condemns all that is pleasing to the eye and ear as vile; and one must have eyes and use them as Evelyn does, to admit them to a place in the memory,—as the wise one "who knows" does not. One knows that philosophy and the true wisdom as preached by Dr. French at St. Martin's, Oxford, on 9 July, 1654; the mathematical instruments seen at St. John's, Oxford; the gardens at Albury and Box Hill, Dorking, and Evelyn's own garden at Sayes Court; the visit to the Dutch Ambassador; Sir J. Winter's project for charring sea-coal; Colonel Blount's invention of the adometer (derived from Leonardo da Vinci, by the way); the Earl of Northumberland's collection of pictures,—

¹Such were the speaking figures long ago exhibited in Spring Gardens and Leicester Fields.



PIAZZA SAN MARCO, VENEZIA.

Engraved by Giacomo Franco (1610), showing three stages.
See page 28.

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one knows that all these things are of so much more importance than a penny peep-show or a puppet; but there is time even for these littler things; and, when London has its fits of purging the earth of such scandalous things as puppets and pleasurable nothings, the time is very ripe for a lot more of them.

And now (London, 1659), the theatres begin to open.¹ During the anarchy and confusion which swiftly followed the death of Oliver Cromwell, Evelyn goes to a performance, for though he is engaged he yet cannot say no. "I went to visit my brother in London, and next day, to see a new opera, after the Italian way, in recitative music and scenes, much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence, but it was prodigious that in a time of such public consternation such a vanity should be kept up or permitted.² I being engaged with company, could not decently resist the going to see it, though my heart smote me for it."—LONDON, 5 May, 1659.

The "new opera" was doubtless D'Avenant's *The History of Sir Francis Drake* (1659), which was performed at the Cockpit Theatre in Drury Lane.

This "opera" was a very long way "after" the Italian way of doing opera, and it is not until twelve years later, according to Evelyn, that a genuine opera from Italy is heard and seen in London.

¹ Three years before this, in 1656, D'Avenant, aided by Lord Whitlocke, Sir John Maynard, and others of the nobility, had somehow dared to open a semi-private theatre at Rutland House, Charterhouse Yard, where he gave "entertainments," "after the manner of the ancients," and *The Siege of Rhodes*, written as an opera, with perspective scenes and recitative, "unpractised here, though of great reputation amongst the nations," writes D'Avenant in his book of the words. D'Avenant's boasting has been made most of by the stage historians who forget Lanière, who set an entire masque to music in the *Stilo Recitativo: The Masque of Lethe*, by Ben Jonson, presented at the house of Lord Hay in London for the entertainment of Baron de Tour, the French Ambassador, on 22 February, 1617.

² Even Evelyn, my good Evelyn, even he cannot escape the plague, the Plague of Terror, as to what they will say. Hundreds of "influential" faces in London on the day Evelyn wrote this, . . . think of them; all looking glum, tight-lipped and hideous; all "Royalists," too!

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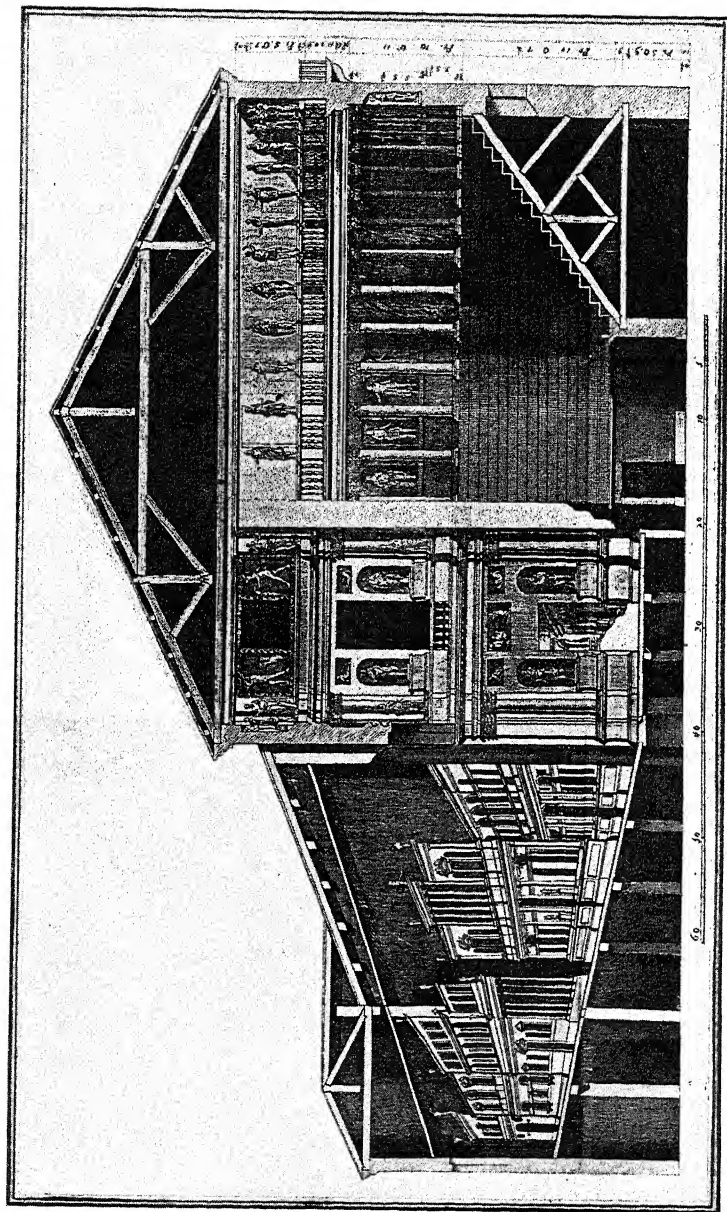
Now it is the year 1660. Back comes King Charles II. to England and his throne, bringing with him a natural liking for merry tunes, cheerful plays, jolly and swagger shows, and a sense of everything handsome about him. I am often puzzled as I wonder what possessed him to leave the post of Master of the Revels in the hands of any but a well-travelled man; such a man as Evelyn, for example.

How easy would it have been for an Evelyn, as revel-master, to have submitted to King Charles plans, sections and elevations of the theatres in Parma, in Vicenza and in Venezia, and with what delight King Charles would have encouraged all and any plans which would have furnished London with some serious theatre, and one or two of the gayer kind. I can see Evelyn being sent to pay other visits to Italy, to look for some artists who might come to London, while our English artists were sent to Venezia.¹

I can see this because I am blind. But someone touches me on the shoulder as I write, and my pen slows down. As though in a train that has stopped at no station, but by some hedgerow: everyone popping heads out from the window and having sensational moments. But there is nothing really sensational; rather a dull fact—the stoker is drunk; and what but intoxicated am I with this hope of what never was and what never will be? Always this intoxicating fantasy about man and his kind; the delusion that when he comes to his pleasures he will treat the whole chance differently from the way in which he faces his pains. If politics, if the sciences, if religions, if trade must be painful, must be handled with becoming fear, caution and solemnity, with angular precision by the water-drinkers, why cannot they recognise that the arts are just

¹ No, this last I cannot see, try how I may.

PLATE 18.



TEATRO OLIMPICO, VICENZA, 1584-1588.

Elevation and section showing the stage slope and the soffitto or ceiling. Scene by Scamozzi. The theatre cost 18,000 ducats. The scene cost 1500 ducats. See page 30.

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the opposite of such things and need quite another way of approach and touch? With ease, and with happiness, in the holiday spirit, not necessarily the 'arf 'oliday touch, but the whole holiday swing. All over the earth artists are at work, and all over the earth there are artists out-of-work, the same men who are working to-day are to-day "out-of-work." "What, unpaid?" someone asks, and adds, "It is money, then, which you hold creates art—what an insufferable notion!" No, it is not money which creates art, but it is not possible for people to see plays, read stories, get pictures, hear music, walk amidst architecture, unless money is forthcoming to make and spread these things. Dreamed, they can be, planned out too, without money, but realised—no. And I still have the delusion that the holiday spirit, if carefully nourished, if a bit lavishly entered into, tends to bring about friendliness between nations, friendliness between men at home, between religions and everything. Nations should be able to say to each other: However much we differ on these 499 points, however angry we become, however proud, tricky, boisterous, our mood, we have all one mood in common—the holiday one. In that mood we only vie one with another to please. England sends Italy six artists, and Italy sends England six; France sends three poets to Germany, Germany sends three sculptors to France; and we all of us send dramas and operas, solely to give delight, not as propaganda—which is a notion utterly puerile and wasteful—but to give delight, to relax the stiff poker minds and persons among us.

There might be two seasons in every year when these theatrical holidays could freshen every land, and when we could all emerge from our tense political or commercial states of mind, and enter the holiday state. During the spring forty thousand of our rulers might take a rest while

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the other forty thousand remained on duty, . . . and these in the autumn would get their rest, . . . just four to six days.

Evelyn's next theatrical entry is in 1661. ". . . After divers years since I had seen any play, I went to see acted *The Scornful Lady* at a new theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields." Four times in 1661 he goes to search in a theatre for something with style in it and gets mere rubbish. "I was so idle as to go to see a play called *Love and Honour*."¹

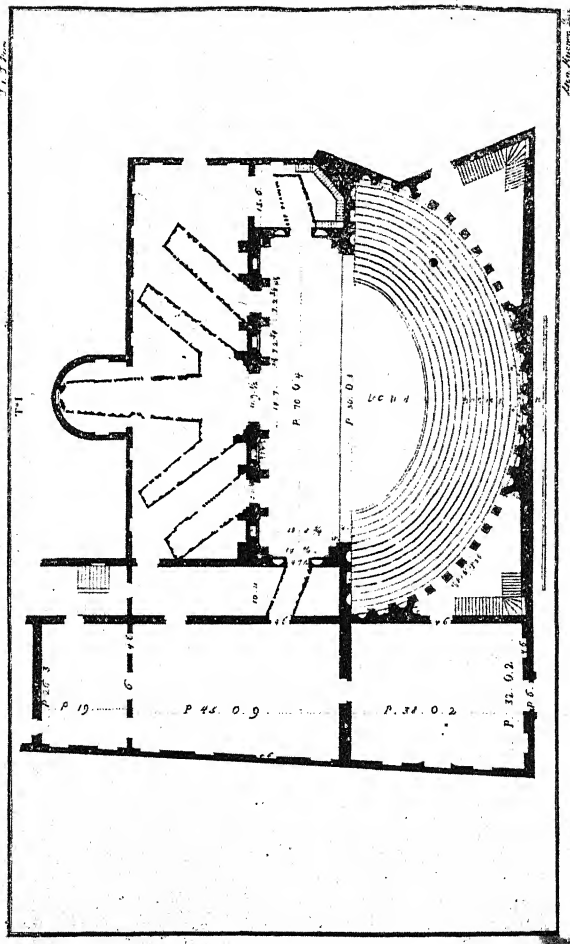
It is only at the end of the year that he comes across a play-bill announcing "*Hamlet* by W. Shakespeare tonight at . . ." With what delight does he go; but on coming home that night in what a strange voice does he speak of the half-empty house, and the attitude of English playgoers towards this priceless possession. "I saw *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* played, but now the old plays began to disgust this refined age, since His Majesty's being so long abroad." . . . "I saw a French comedy acted at Whitehall."

The theatre-going of Evelyn for 1662 consists of seeing seven pieces; or rather of seeing six, and hearing one rehearsed. Evelyn is very particular whether he goes to *see* or to *hear*. "I go to see a whole, I go to listen to a part," is what he will tell you.² "I saw acted the Third Part of the *Siege of Rhodes*. In this acted the fair and famous comedian called Roxalana from the part she performed, and I think it was the last, she being taken to be the Earl of Oxford's miss (as at that time they began to call lewd women). It was in recitative music." Seven days later he gets another shock, for at the Cockpit Theatre in Whitehall "This night was acted before His Majesty

¹ A tragi-comedy by Sir William D'Avenant. The performance took place in the morning.

² I note that Stendhal speaks so too, noting continually, relative to his theatre-going, "*je l'ai vu ce soir*," "*on y voit*," "*j'ai vu*"; continually accentuating what he has *seen*.

PLATE 19.



TEATRO OLIMPICO, VICENZA.

By Palladio and Scamozzi, 1580-1584, showing the "hall to ballot in." See pages 30 and 32.

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The Widow, a lewd play." The next day he hurries away from London. "I came home to be private a little, not at all affecting the life and hurry of Court." Life and hurry is but moderately stating it.

Still, by next month, on Saturday, 11 February, he is back at the theatre. "I saw a comedy acted before the Duchess of York at the Cockpit. The King was not at it."

On Wednesday, 16 October, Evelyn writes, "I saw *Volpone* acted at Court before their Majesties." So the Court is looking up! Then 20 November, "Dined with the comptroller, Sir Hugh Pollard; afterwards saw *The Young Admiral* acted before the King."

All goes well. Then, "I dined with the Master of the Mint, where was old Sir Ralph Freeman; passing my evening at the Queen Mother's Court, at night saw acted *The Committee*, a ridiculous play of Sir R. Howard, where the mimic, Lacy, acted the Irish footman to admiration."

Better and better, Evelyn had lately seen at Windsor Castle some paintings of Lacy, "the famous Roscius or comedian,"¹ this variety artist, as he would be called to-day. These paintings were by "Mr. Michael Wright," a Scotchman who was born about 1625 and who died in 1700, and who, for some reason, signed his pictures J. M. Ritus.

The Lacy portraits were three and were on one canvas; "as a gallant, a Presbyterian Minister, and a Scotch Highlander in his plaid," i.e. as "Teague" in *The Committee*, the play Evelyn saw on 27 November; as "Scruple" in *The Cheats*, by John Wilson,² and as "Gaillard" in *The Variety*.

A supposed copy of this painting is in the Garrick Club

¹ Mr. Allardyce Nicoll tells us that Lacy was the actor who was a particular favourite of King Charles II., was a dramatist as well as a player, . . . a noted Falstaff.

² A pre-Restoration play by William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, first performed in 1639-40 and published in 1649. (Albright.)

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and is attributed to Wright (1675), but on the back is inscribed, "John Lacy, one of His Majesty's Comedians, representing Parson Scruple in *The Cheat*, in the *Taming of the Shrew*,¹ and Monsieur de Vice in *The Country Captain*. M. Wright 1675."

On 17 December, Evelyn "saw acted before the King *The Law against Lovers*"—a tragi-comic blend of *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, by D'Avenant.

On 23 December he goes to a rehearsal of *The Adventure of Five Hours*² at the Duke's Theatre, and on 8 January goes to see it performed. "I went to see my kinsman, Sir George Tuke's comedy acted at the Duke's Theatre, which took so universally, that it was acted for some weeks every day, and it was believed it would be worth to the comedians £400 or £500. The plot was incomparable, but the language stiff and formal." He is rather severe with his kinsman's part of the work, but it may become clearer why, when we read of certain plays of his own which he read to Pepys, but which don't seem to have been acted as was Sir George Tuke's. The entry in Pepys' Diary is three years later, 5 November, 1665. He had gone to see Evelyn, and Evelyn had read to him "part of a play or two of his making, very good, but not as he conceits them, I think, to be." Yet Evelyn is silent as to his own "play or two."

In 1663, on 5 February, he goes to see *The Wild Gallant* at the Vere Street Theatre.

1664, 5 February, "I saw *The Indian Queen* acted, a tragedy well written, so beautiful with rich scenes as the like had never been seen here, or haply (except rarely) elsewhere on a mercenary theatre."

Perhaps he means by this reference to a "mercenary

¹ He adapted Shakespeare's play, called it *Sauny the Scot or the Taming of the Shrew*, and acted in it in the rôle of Sauny.

² A play whose plot was taken out of the famous Spanish poet, Calderon.

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theatre" that he will not compare this production of *The Indian Queen* with the productions he had seen in Venezia, because those were produced as a rule without thought of "making it pay," the theatres being one of the aristocratic Italian sports, as was football, which to the Italian was not merely a game of strength, but was as much a game of skill and beauty as was and is also the banner-throwing at Siena. In the *Barriera* (see Plate 9), too, strength there had to be, and there had to be beauty—or the thing would have seemed not worth doing to the Italians of that day.

27 April he sees *Love in a Tub*. •

And now the sad results of Sir Henry Herbert's policy in dealing with the Theatre and its "lewd plays" begin to appear in an entry of 1666. Why should a theatrical performance be "lewd"? Why should the Theatre appeal to our temperament as the most fit place in which to introduce what Hamlet calls "country matters"? The spectators have the ordering of these things, and if our good little spectator Evelyn had had his way he would have had the theatres as gay, as brilliant, as he found them in Venezia, but no "indecent women." "This night was acted my Lord Broghill's tragedy called *Mustapha*, before their Majesties at Court, at which I was present; very seldom going to the public theatres for many reasons now, as they were abused to an atheistical liberty; foul and indecent women now (and never till now) permitted to appear, and act, who, inflaming several young noblemen and gallants, became their misses, and to some, their wives; witness the Earl of Oxford, Sir R. Howard, Prince Rupert, the Earl of Dorset, and another greater person than any of them, who fell in their snares to the reproach of their noble families, and ruin of both body and soul.

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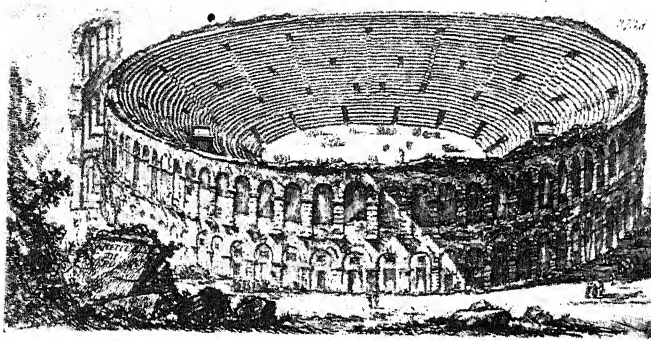
I was invited by my Lord Chamberlain to see this tragedy, exceedingly well written, though in my mind I did not approve of any such pastime in a time of such judgments and calamities.”—LONDON, 18 *October*, 1666.

So we see that all Herbert, the censor, *the* authority over theatres, could do, was to make himself rich and gloat on his percentages while ruining the stage of which he was the guardian. But even Evelyn and Herbert (had the latter really troubled himself) I fear could not have prevented our performers from rendering a fine old theatrical calling ridiculous, while quite convinced they were but doing what was being done in Italy and France. The women and the fools had heard that women acted in Venezia, Padova, Firenze, and took this to mean that they must perforce have been “lewd” as Evelyn finds these English performers—as undoubtedly they were—as assuredly in Italy they were not.

Next year he goes to a ball in the Cockpit Theatre in Whitehall. “I was present at a magnificent ball, or masque, in the theatre at the Court, where their Majesties and all the great lords and ladies danced, infinitely gallant, the men in their richly embroidered most becoming vests.”—LONDON, 18 *February*, 1667.

I wonder if the theatre was adapted for this ball and how it was changed. Was the dance performed on the stage or were the seats removed?—the stage made level with the floor of the auditorium?—what? I suppose someone knows; . . . in Italy most such facts are known, for books recorded the events and are reprinted for the historians, who are as much interested in such matters as we are interested in what was talked, what each person wore. Often as not drawings exist showing the changes made for one evening in an Italian palace.

1667, 19 *February*. “I saw a comedy acted at Court.”



AMFITEATRO DI VERONA.
FROM AN ETCHING BY G. B. PIRANESI (1720-1778).
See page 32.

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Evelyn makes no comment on this performance—was it by Mr. Dryden that he says no more?

14 March. By Magog, I had almost omitted this evening's entertainment. I cannot say how it is, but Mr. Dryden's name on the bill always makes me turn from the Cockpit box-office—and I thought I had Evelyn's arm linked in mine—this perhaps explains how I had almost dragged him away from a play which he really did sit out, for he writes: 14 March, "Saw *The Virgin Queen*, a play written by Mr. Dryden." No more.

The puppets now have come to town to sweeten the tone of theatric things. Both Evelyn and Pepys go to look at them. There seem to have been two companies, one at Charing Cross and one at St. Bartholomew's Fair.

"I saw the famous Italian puppet-play, for it was no other."¹—LONDON, 21 August, 1667.

"Leaving my wife to come home with them [two ladies], I to Bartholomew fayre to walk up and down; and there among other things, find my Lady Castlemaine at a puppet play, *Patient Grizell*, and the street full of people expecting her coming out," writes Pepys.

On 4 February, 1668, he goes to the Court playhouse and sees *Horace* by Mrs. Philips,—“the virtuous Mrs. Philips,” writes Evelyn.

On 19 June, 1668, he goes to see a play by Dryden called *An Evening's Love*; and so little does he like it that he forgets its title, calls it *The Evening Lover* and adds

¹ A certain puppet showman, Anthony Devotte, was in London about this time. Was it he who performed the famous “Italian puppet play”? On 16 July, 1669, he claims some protection from the Lord Chamberlayne, the Earle of Manchester. Devotto is an Italian name—one still finds it in Italy—but as for Anthony Devotte, I have found no sign of him in any other place but in the above document of appeal. In an inscription to a design by Hogarth, called “A Just View of the British Stage, 1725,” which is rather too late for our purpose, the man referred to by Hogarth as M. D-v—to is the scene-painter, John Devoto. The design shows us Booth, Wilkes and Cibber of Drury Lane colouring a pantomime, with puppets at a table. In the overseers' books for 1666, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, there are entries of Punchinello booths at Charing Cross.

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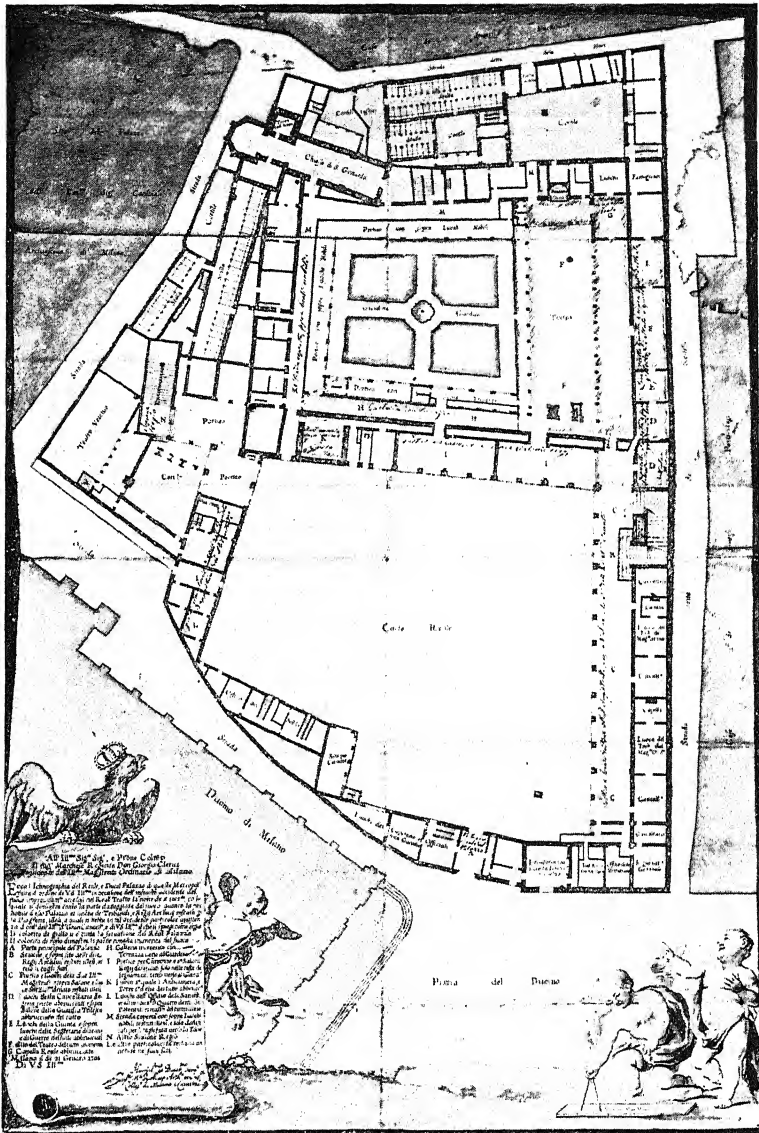
"a foolish plot, and very profane"; it afflicted him to see "how the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentious times." He means the *English* stage, for Molière was still living and his stage not degenerated in the least.

A year passes, Evelyn again goes to a play—the women again spoil the whole thing for him.—Two years pass. He goes to a Court performance at the Whitehall Cockpit. "I saw the great ball danced by the Queen and distinguished ladies at Whitehall Theatre. Next day, was acted there the famous play called the *Siege of Granada*, two days acted successively; there were indeed very glorious scenes and perspectives, the work of Mr. Streeter, who well understands it."¹—LONDON, 9 *February*, 1671.

About three weeks later, a most unfortunate thing happens. It is unfortunate for Evelyn, for even a cat may look at a king, and a comedienne like Nelly Gwynne was no cat. Nelly was not on the stage at that time and so the Drama was not in any danger. This is the awful thing which happened: "I thence walked with him [the King] through St. James' Park to the Garden where I both saw and heard a very familiar discourse between . . . and Mrs. Nelly, as they called an impudent comedian, she looking out of her window on a terrace at the top of the wall, and . . . standing on the green walk under it. I was heartily sorry at this scene. Thence the King walked to the Duchess of Cleveland, another lady of pleasure, and curse of our nation."—LONDON, 1 *March*, 1671.

There is a pretty abominable painting of this incident in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, done by someone in the Victorian era. Nothing that Evelyn can say, can damn the Restoration more

¹ Evelyn here refers to Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*. Robert Streeter, an artist held in much esteem at this period, and enjoying the post of Serjeant Painter to the King, who was very fond of him, dies in 1680. He is often mentioned by Evelyn. (Bray.)



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thoroughly; but that the painting damns the Victorian more is too bad.

And now, after a glance at some scenic things, "... on my return home I stepped in at the theatre to see the new machines for the intended scenes, which were indeed very costly and magnificent."—LONDON, 26 *June*, 1671.

Evelyn goes to see what proves to be his last comedy performed by "indecent women." "... went to see the Duke of Buckingham's ridiculous farce and rhapsody, called *The Recital*,¹ buffooning all plays, yet profane enough."—LONDON, 14 *December*, 1671.

In the future he will go to a play when performed by gentlemen and ladies of the Court, or by Italians,—but no more lewd plays for him. I wonder if it's high-brow of him to like his evenings at the theatre to be different from what they evidently were. It's a queer thought that perhaps this man Evelyn was perfectly right, after all, in wishing to keep things in their right place.

So let us go with him on the 31st of July of the next year (1672), and let us try to be entertained as he was. "I entertained the Maids of Honour (among whom there was one I infinitely esteemed for her many and extraordinary virtues) at a comedy this afternoon, and so went home." Evelyn seems to be losing his old understanding of the values of keeping things in their place, for he is here reduced to being entertained by something extraneous to the entertainment; that is to say, entertained by one of the audience, and by the fact of her being there. This lady whom he "esteemed for her many and extraordinary virtues" was Mrs. Blagg, who seems to have possessed wit, beauty and virtue. Why she should *not* have possessed wit, beauty and virtue is a little difficult to understand. Doubtless in the English Court of Charles II.

¹ The title of this farce is *The Rehearsal*.

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there were more who possessed these three qualities than anyone suspected. If you ask me to explain myself, I am not at home.

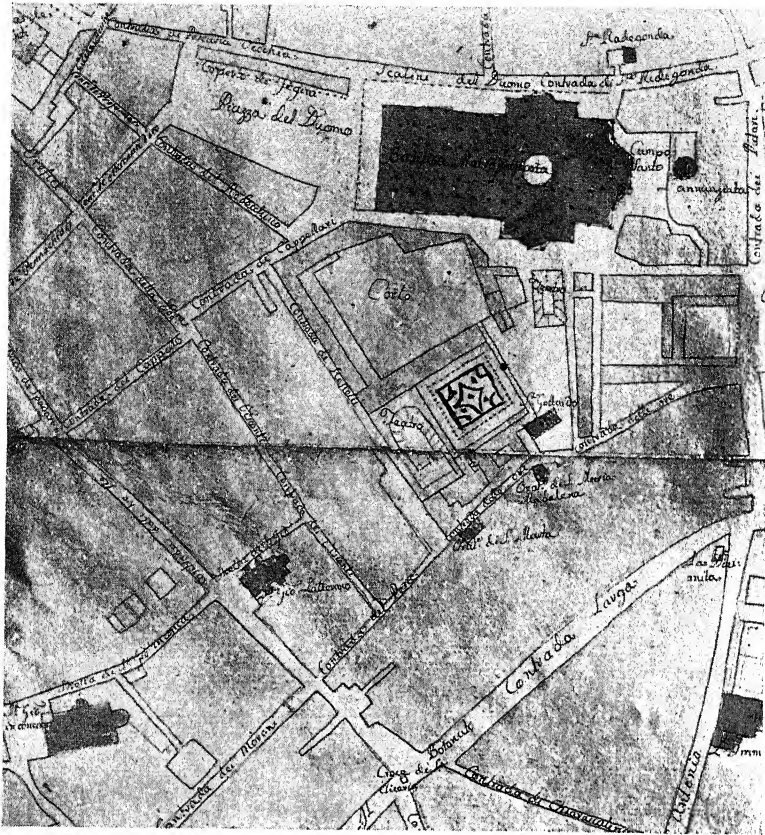
But being now with Evelyn after the play, I look at him and I am so full of guesses about his state of being, that the tapers will all be out if I continue to guess any longer. He sits there, telling me of her piety and her virtue, he calls her an "excellent creature," he says so at least thirteen times; but is it necessary to go to the play to discover the excellence of a fellow-creature? Well, he goes no more to the play that year. Possibly it has dawned on him that it is comedies, and not excellent creatures, that have to be looked for at the playhouse.

When he does go, it is the old 1645 joy again. "I saw the Italian comedy at the Court this afternoon," 29 May, 1673. I wish I knew the name of this comedy. Somebody will look it up in London—where I wish I could be, so that I could look it up for myself.¹ This entry is neat and final in its snap: "I saw the Italian comedy at the Court this afternoon," *niente altro*—and as luck would have it, eight months later he is able to cap his last entry with this: "I saw an Italian opera in music, the first that had been in England of this kind."—5 *January*, 1674. You will remember that, in 1659, he speaks of the new opera that he went to see, on 5 May, as only being "*after* the Italian way, in recitative music and scenes, much inferior to the

¹ In 1673, from May to September, the greatest of all actors then living visited England: Tiberio Fiorilli (see Fig. 1). Was it Fiorilli that Evelyn saw? It is said that he had seen him in Italy . . . he says so himself, for there was only one who could be called "the Italian Scaramuccio" (29 September, 1675); but in his Italian records I have not discovered where and when he actually saw him there.

This Fiorilli was in September presented with a medallion and a chain of gold by Charles II.

"On September 4, 1673, the Lord Chamberlain issued an order 'to signifie . . . his Majesties pleasure that you prepare and deliver or cause to be prepared and delivered unto Scaramouchi and Harlekin unto each of them a Medal and chayne of Gold'; and later, on September 6 ordered a special gift of twenty ounces of white plate to be sent to the same company."



PALAZZO DUCALE, MILANO.

FROM A PLAN OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN THE ARCHIVIO
STORICO, MILANO.

It shows the Royal (then Ducal) Palace and its two Theatres. The Palace is contained within the Contrada dei Cappellari, the Contrada di Rastelli, the Contrada delle Ore, and an unnamed street which to-day is named Contrada del Palazzo Reale. Indications of the smaller of the two theatres (that in the last-named street) are to be found only in manuscripts. Brozzi, referring to the large Ducal Theatre, says, "There was another smaller theatre for performances in prose in the Via delle Ore," but the plan shows this to be incorrect. I have seen this second theatre as shown in our plan marked on four other plans, one dated 1708, one 1722, another circa 1740, a fourth 1763. On the 1740 plan (not reproduced here) the theatre is entered as "Teatrino vecchio inutile," which means "The old little theatre now disused." See page 33.

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Italian composure and magnificence." Yes—I hold to it—Evelyn was a good spectator, I think he knew the difference between a thing that was genuine and one of the just-as-good . . . Italian opera, French opera and other operas.

I suppose—and, in supposing, abdicate even the rôle of mock-historian,—that this real Italian opera that he saw in 1674 would be no other than that Downes calls "the long expected opera of *Psyche* by Shadwell, Mr. Locke, M. Saint André the dancing master, Mr. Stephenson the scene-painter, and *that great master Signor Giovanni Battista Draghi*, Master of Italian music to the King." Draghi, according to Grove, settled in London in the middle of the seventeenth century and so completely adopted the English style of composition, that he must be regarded, he says, as an English composer. This passage by Grove makes me wonder after all whether *Psyche* was the opera alluded to by Evelyn.¹

¹ Since writing this I see that Dr. Allardyce Nicoll (who is a genuine historian, whereas I am only a poor understudy of the rôle) supposes quite other than I have done.

He says, "we are bound to suppose" that this opera was *Ariane, ou, Le Mariage de Bacchus*, a French opera and not Italian as Evelyn says. I quote Dr. Nicoll:

"*The french Opera* on Monday, March 30, 1674. This is undoubtedly the *Ariane, ou, Le Mariage de Bacchus*, which was printed both in French and in English this year. It was presented by 'L'academie royale de Musique,' and was arranged by Grabut, one of the chief French composers and musicians in the King's service.

"Evelyn in his diary on Monday, January 5, 1875/4, noted a performance of 'an Italian opera in music, the first that had been in England of this kind.' No doubt Evelyn here was using 'Italian' merely to express the recitative type of opera in contradistinction to the English dramatic species, and we are bound to suppose that in January he had been at a semi-public rehearsal of *Ariane* just as he had attended a rehearsal of Tuke's *The Adventures of Five Hours* on December 23, 1662, fully a month before its regular appearance on the stage. It may be noted that admission of the public to rehearsals of Italian operas in the early eighteenth century was a common practice, as the advertisements in *The Daily Courant* prove to us. That *Ariane* did not appear publicly and in all its glory in January is made quite plain by the fact that on March 27, 1674, a warrant was issued to Christopher Wren ordering him to deliver to Grabut 'such of the scenes remayning in the Theatre at Whitehall as shalbe usefull for the french Opera at the Theatre.' (L. C., 5/140, p. 456.)" (*Times Literary Supplement*, October 5, 1922.)

This was on the Friday before the public performance. Grabut in this

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The next entry in the Diary returns to Mrs. Blagg: "Saw a comedy at night, at Court, acted by the ladies only, amongst them Lady Mary and Ann, His Royal Highness's two daughters, and my dear friend, Mrs. Blagg, who, having the principal part, performed it to admiration. They were all covered with jewels."—LONDON, 15 December, 1674.

This comedy was *The Masque of Calisto*, or *The Chaste Nymph*, by John Crowne. None but ladies performed parts in this piece. Among them was a certain Mrs. Jennings who later became the Duchess of Marlborough. There were also the Countess of Sussex, Lady Henrietta Wentworth; and dancing in the masque were the Duke of Monmouth, Lord Dunblaine and Lord Daincourt.

But besides these ladies and gentlemen, the whole affair seems to have been helped along by Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Knight, and Mrs. Butler, and a number of other actresses.

On the 22nd, that is seven days later, Evelyn says he "was at the repetition of the Pastoral, on which occasion Mrs. Blagg had about her near £20,000 worth of jewels, of which she lost one in worth about £80, borrowed of the

order was bidden to restore the scenes within fourteen days, but apparently they had not been sent back fully a month later (see L. C., 5/140, p. 471, letter dated 27 April, 1674, ordering their return).

For this opera Grabut appears to have engaged the services of a number of foreign artists, mainly dancers. About the beginning of April the management of Drury Lane entered into some sort of an agreement with him whereby it was arranged that some of "the French Dancing Masters" should perform at the theatre, a few at the rate of 10s. per acting day, and six at the rate of 5s. per day whether they danced or not. For nearly two months they rehearsed, and the management provided costumes for them, when suddenly Grabut refused to let them perform (L. C., 5/140, end of volume, entry dated 2 May, 1674). Four days after receiving a complaint about this the Lord Chamberlain on 6 May issued an order "that mr Pecurr (?) Mr Le Temps Mr Shenan and Mr D'muraile ffrench Dancers in the late opera doe attend Mr Killegrew Master of His Mates Comoedians in his Mates Theatre Royall and observe and perform his comands according to agreem betweene them." (L. C., 5/140, p. 472.) Probably these dancers were employed for *entr'acte* shows to deck out regular plays for some months or years.

In May, 1675, Dumraille is mentioned among the French dancers who took part in Crowne's spectacular masque of *Calisto* at Court.

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Countess of Suffolk. The press was so great, that it is a wonder she lost no more. The Duke of York made it good." There is nothing to show whether this is the same play, *The Masque of Calisto*, which he saw seven nights ago; nothing to say whether they were *all* ladies and gentlemen of the Court performing around Mrs. Blagg, or whether the performance was helped along by Mrs. Davis and Company.

So I am glad to feel that there is still a doubt as to whether it was a low actress or a high lady or a middling carpenter who took the gem. The Duke's making it good looks very suspicious. How like this entry of Evelyn's is to the one in to-day's *Daily Ism*—"Countess loses valuable Stone. Worth £800. Actress suspected." Well, as the Duke made it good—all's well!

But to think that this should have happened to Mrs. Blagg of all people, when you and I (especially if we have read her *Life* written by Evelyn) are beginning now, infinitely, to esteem her for her "many and extraordinary virtues."¹

A month later, Evelyn visits Mr. Streeter, the "painter of perspective." A painter of perspective meant a scenic artist in those days.

¹ In his *Life* of this "blessed saint" as he calls her, Evelyn speaks of her as not one easily persuaded to go to a theatre, and says, "therefore, to be now herself an Actress (tho' among such an Assembly of noble Persons) was to putt a Mortification on her, that cost her not only great reluctancy, but many teares. But there was no refusing; the King and Duke had laid their Commands upon her . . . she had her part assigned her, which, as it was the most illustrious (*i.e. that of Chastity*) soe never was there any performed with more grace. . . ."

Of the lost jewel he says it was a diamond and that after the act "the Stage was immediately swept, and dilligent search made to find it, but without success, soe, as probably it had been taken from her, as she was off inviron'd with that infinite Crowd. . . ." Then he tells of her going—"Without complimenting any Creature, or trifling with the rest who staid the collation and refreshment that was prepar'd, away she slipps like a Spirit to Berkley House, and to her little Oratorye; whither I waited on her, and left her on her knees, thanking God that she was delivered from this vanity, and with her Saviour again, never, says she, will I come within this temptation more whilst I breathe." ("THE LIFE OF MRS. GODOLPHIN. By John Evelyn. London, Pickering. 1897. Now published," etc. etc.)

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But it was not to see what new devices he had evolved from the Italian, but to comfort him in a serious illness, that Evelyn calls. "Went to see Mr. Streeter, that excellent painter of perspective and landscape, to comfort and encourage him to be cut for the stone, with which the honest man was exceeding afflicted."

Still, I can't get away from the thought of Mrs. Blagg and that diamond. And the more I think of it, the happier I am to know that the Duke made it good.

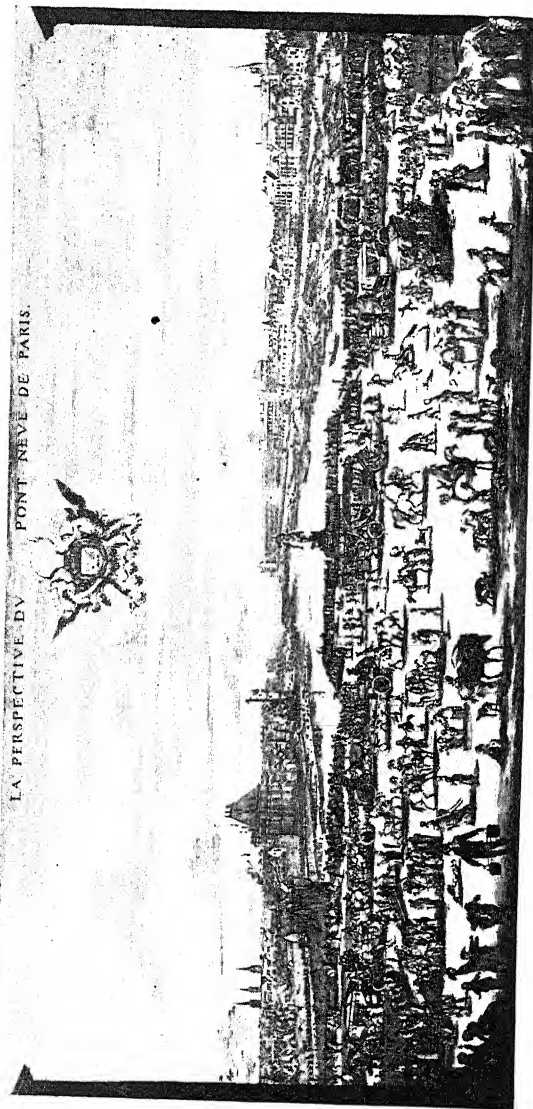
On 2 September Evelyn makes the entry: "I went to see Dulwich College, being the pious foundation of one Alleyn, a famous comedian in King James's time." I would ask here—of the air—why that famous comedian did not found a School for the Theatre whilst he was laying foundations—if I thought the air could answer me. Nothing and no one else can—though I find a cynical reply in the facts concerning the Royal Dramatic College founded in 1858 by Charles Kean, Ben Webster, Charles Dickens and Thackeray; built in 1865; opened by the Prince of Wales; patronised by Queen Victoria, and an utter failure because it was "to benefit distressed actors and their children" instead of to give life to the Theatre. That was Dickens-like, but what was Thackeray thinking of? Probably of nothing. But a large building was erected, money spent, and all founded upon unnecessary sobbing and feeling sad about distressed actors, instead of being founded on the intelligence and the desire to forward acting by the best conceivable means.

On 29 September, 1675, Evelyn sees his Italian Scaramuccio at Court.

"I saw the Italian Scaramuccio act before the King at Whitehall, people giving money to come in, which was very scandalous, and never so before at Court diversions. Having seen him act before in Italy, many years past, I

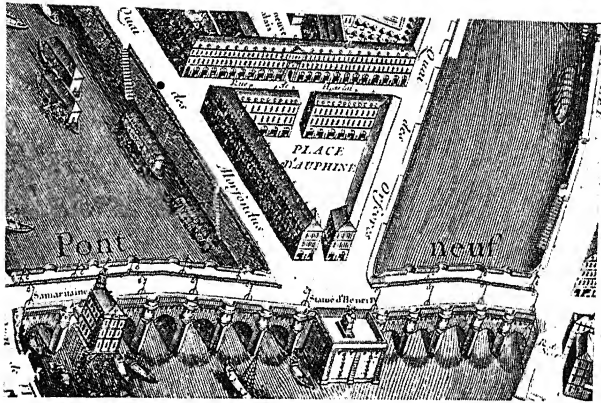
PLATE 23.

LA PERSPECTIVE DV PONT NEUF DE PARIS.



THE PONT NEUF, PARIS, 1646.

Engraved by Stefano della Bella. See pages 35 and 36.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE PONT NEUF.

Showing the Rue de Harlai where du Bosse lived and engraved and was visited by Evelyn in 1647. See page 36.

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was not averse from seeing the most excellent of that kind of folly."

This was none other than Tiberio Fiorilli, Molière's tutor and the greatest actor of his time, who ranks with Francesco Andreini, Barbieri and Martinelli. Andrew Marvell was at this Whitehall performance, and the next year on 24 July wrote to Mr. William Ramsden in a letter giving various pieces of Court news: "Scaramuccio acting daily in the hall of Whitehall, and all sorts of people flocking thither, and paying their money as at a common playhouse; nay even a 12 penny gallery is builded for the convenience of his Majesty's poorer subjects."

England, rich and poor, goes to see this master comedian, second to none. And if I know anything of great comedians, it is this: they act best when the audience is leavened by a large smattering of the ordinary people, and to me this explains why Charles II., always a man of common-sense (a sense so despised by those tight-lipped friends of his), who *very often* did a wise thing spite of the cynical verse, allowed people to come and pay for seats, for that brings the inspiration of the muses. The dead-heads are deadhearts to play to. To have to be funny to a theatre full of courtiers is well-nigh impossible; to have to face people like Marvell, who sat blankly amazed at this unconventional proceeding, or, if not amazed, curious, . . . or, if not curious, amused, at any rate not at ease, . . . to have to play to such uneasy ones is nothing for Fiorilli; he must have real people to speak to, . . . and he gets them.¹

After having seen this most excellent comedian, Evelyn goes no more to the theatre for seven years.

¹ Fiorilli had been once before to London it would seem: I quote H. Maynard Smith:

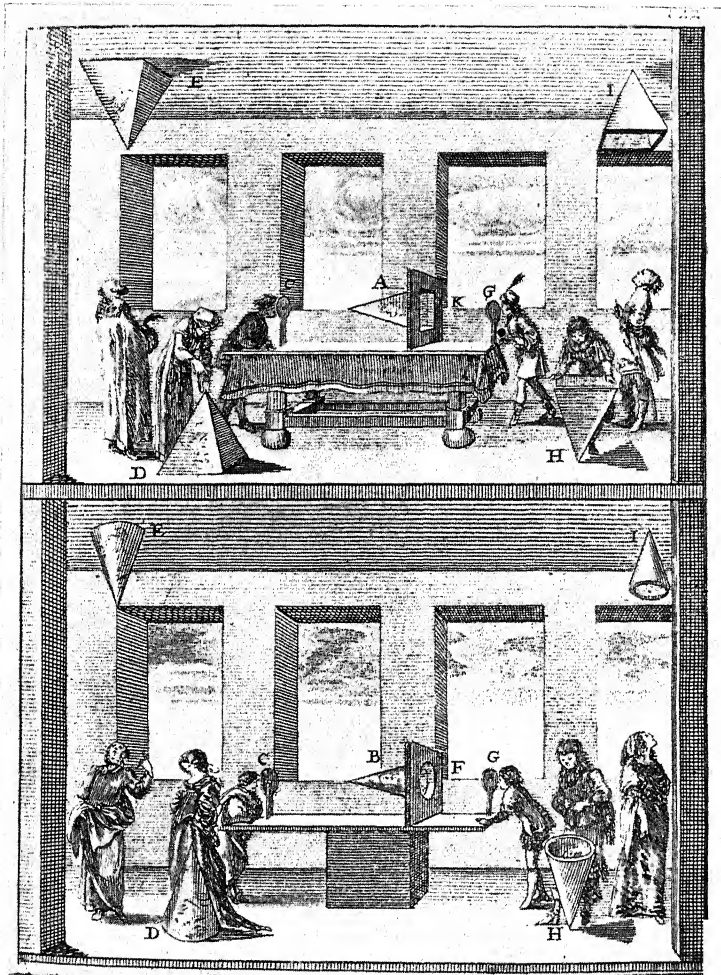
"Evelyn saw Tiberio Fiurelli act as Scaramuccio while in Italy, and again in Whitehall in 1675. Fiurelli was first in England from May to September in 1673, and then returned to Sondiac's Theatre in Paris. He paid England another visit in July 1675."

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On 6 January, 1684, the river being quite frozen over, Evelyn after waiting three days more and trying it with his toe, "went across the Thames on the ice," and discovered there streets, people roasting meat, shops, the hubbub of the city, everything as in a town except "coaches, carts, and horses." This frost is so severe that it continues beyond the 24th, on which day Evelyn observes that there is a puppet-booth open and, let us hope, closed. The ice bears more than it did in the previous frost for on the 5th of February he drives across in his coach.

From cold to heat, from January to July, from hubbub to the sweet sounds of Italian music, and Evelyn is at his simplest—he is almost too simple. For on this 25th of July, 1684, he "dined at Lord Falkland's, Treasurer of the Navy, where after dinner we had rare music, there being amongst others, Signor Pietro Reggio,¹ and Signor John Baptist, both famous, one for his voice, the other for playing on the harpsichord, few if any in Europe exceeding him. There was also a Frenchman who sung an admirable bass." Signor Pietro Reggio and Signor John Baptist, how delightful! Giovanni Battista (i.e. John Baptist) is, to be sure, an ordinary Christian name in Italy. Giovanni Battistas exist in the village where I live now. I suppose there must be eighty or ninety of them here; there must be over five thousand in Roma and Firenze. The name is sometimes written Gianbattista or Gio.Batt. And Pietro Reggio? Well; that is a little clearer, for while it is impossible to locate one out of a million Gianbattistas, and while it would be equally impossible to locate one of a million Signor Pietros or plain Peters, the town named Reggio helps a little. Possibly someone some day will trace Reggio either to Emilia or

¹ In the British Museum lies a manuscript of his, "No. 975—Reggio Pietro, Canti a due voci, Mottetti, Madrigali, ecc., f. 195, 31440." *Catalogo manoscritti*, etc. Torino, 1890.



SOME PEEPSHOWS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.
FROM PADRE DU BREUIL'S "LA PERSPECTIVE PRATIQUE," 1651.
See page 46.

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Calabria. Grove tells us that he was born in Genova, which is strange, for in Italy the artists were wont to take as surnames the name of the town they were born in. Thus Signor Bibiena is really Signor Galli from Bibiena. Leonardo da Vinci is simply Leonardo from Vinci. But, like Evelyn, I grow too simple.

CONCLUSION

I FEEL like one in a train which is pulling up at the last station after a two days' journey. I see the brown-grey roofs of the suburbs of the town, I am aware that something is nearly over, and, devil take it, if Charles the King doesn't give up the ghost as a prelude to the sadder event that is to come. I don't wish to stop talking with you about our Evelyn but I see I shall have to.

It is the 6th of February, 1685, and Evelyn is seated at his table in the evening and is writing slowly: how he went to London last Monday, how ill the King was, and then he comes to these words: "he gave up the ghost at half-an-hour after eleven in the morning, being the sixth of February 1685, in the 26th year of his reign, and the 54th of his age."

No more play-going, no more theatres, no more Mrs. Blagg. We are all like those travellers in the train; we've read every bit in the papers that are lying about in the carriage . . . three years pass—or we pass under three tunnels slowly . . . slowly. Evelyn is murmuring quietly in the corner of the carriage: "and I dined at Mr. Pepys, where I heard the rare voice of Mr. Pule, who was lately come from Italy, reputed the most excellent singer we had ever had. He sung several compositions of the late Dr. Purcell."

Then he seems to go off into a doze. Somehow or other, we are not so interested in Mr. Pule or Dr. Purcell as we ought to be. I, for one, am getting my luggage out of the rack, when suddenly the train comes to a full stop from 1699 to 1703; four long minutes. The train pulls up, no

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one puts his head out of the window because to stop is usual. But just as we always do, so does Evelyn. A last dash for the paper and the long pause seems intolerably long. He snatches it up and reads out: "A famous young woman, an Italian, was hired by our comedians to sing on the stage, during so many plays, for which they gave her £500; which part by her voice alone at the end of three scenes she performed with such modesty and grace, and above all with such skill, that there was never any who did anything comparable with their voices. She was to go home to the Court of the King of Prussia, and I believe carried with her out of this vain nation above £1000, everybody coveting to hear her at their private houses."

Before he has come to the end of this paragraph everyone is in the corridor, the train has arrived—the journey ends. "Bon Voyage," "A rivederci"!

London, February, 1706; Mr. Evelyn died on the 27th of this month.

Venezia, 1922.

BOOKS AND ACTORS

BOOKS AND ACTORS

THERE was a delightful collection of modern books on the Theatre to be seen in the reading-room of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1922. It was so well worth a visit that I spent hours looking them over. There was a catalogue of the books to be had for a few pence.

The first entry was rather unfortunate, it being a volume called *Our Problems*, and though it was written by an actor is not worthy of the actor's hopes: neither his hopes in 1922, or at any time, for that matter.

Our eternal hope for the new stage lies first with the actor, but not every actor. He must be a good actor—and more—a serious man: and while the author-actor of *Our Problems* was what we call a capable actor, on reading his book you come to see that he could not have been a particularly serious man.

What is a good actor? I do not say a great actor—a good actor.¹ To begin with, he is a man who works hard. A good actor will work from 8.30 each morning until 12.30; then from 2 to 6; and in the evening he will perform on the stage.

The reason why more good actors do not exist to-day is because they do not work all day, because they do not study as the artists study, because they do not experiment, and therefore do not use their brains and imaginations.

¹ How many a good actor I can recall:—there was Sugden, there was Alfred Bishop, and Wenman. And Hawtrey, Haverland, Harvey, Laurence Irving, Fred Leslie, Tree: and to-day there are a great number of good actors. In Italy most of them are good actors to-day. In Russia many excellent performers of all kinds.

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They are fond of the theatre, but are not sufficiently fond of work.

And what must a good actor work at?

I will tell you definitely.

He must work to become something more than an ordinary actor.

He must work to understand a little more freshly, more vividly, what life is. At present the ordinary actor understands only what he fancies it to be, that is, a fanciful stereotyped thing; he never gets into touch with real life—neither does he become aware of the state of imagination which artists call vision.

The ordinary actor on rising late looks at himself in the mirror; then he begins to make a few faces—he always does this; and, strange as it may sound, these faces are really not worth making.

They are the stereotyped faces. The eyebrows go up, as on enquiring, "Am I in face to-day?"; then a frown "passable"; a friendly nod; a smile; and the actor passes away from his mirror and proceeds to use the said faces over his coffee and his newspaper. And then he looks out of the window into the street, not so much to see anything as to continue his series of faces.

But he tires of this, and before long he is himself—a pleasant, a dull, a practical man. Practical!—for the first thought, the first real thought of the morning has come to him, and it is a thought of business, for an actor has bills to pay like everyone else. The price of making faces is enormous. The price of acting like a god is no more, but the salary is much higher. This fact never occurs until too late to the mediocre actor, the actor who does not work, but it occurs then.

And on thinking of business, his face assumes at least a human expression for a moment. But only for a moment.

BOOKS AND ACTORS

"This will never do," he seems to say, and quickly strikes an attitude and slips into another stereotyped expression.

He goes on dressing; he has by this time made eight to ten new faces; he is ready to go out. "Now for a real serviceable face." And after a moment's pause, he has it in a flash; the expression of a man with weighty concerns on his mind. That is the right face to carry him downstairs and into the street. He lingers one moment, his hand on the latch of the door, then—out into the street—on to that long stage, the street. "Decidedly," says a passer-by, "there goes a man with a deep-rooted trouble, poor fellow." The actor advances up the street and, at the corner, makes another pause—looks to the right, and then to the left, then takes a middle course—onward.

Why did he look to the right, and why to the left? For no real reason whatever; he was not looking at anything, but it was just part of the play: look here, and look there, and go a third way.

.

I ONCE knew an actor-manager who would look eight times at his gold watch in the course of a two minutes' stroll down my street. His first look would be casual, his second rather interested, his third pensive, his fourth as though slightly surprised. At his fifth look he would mutter "Tut-tut" with his tongue and teeth, at his sixth he would quicken his pace, at his seventh he would stop suddenly, exclaiming "By Jove, half-past ten," and at his eighth he would shake his head.

Once I caught him at the eighth look. "What is the time?" I asked him. "Don't know, my dear fellow," and out came the watch for the ninth time. "Whew!!" he whistled, "half-past ten, I *shall* have to hurry," and on

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he rushed as though something were really doing at last. But nothing was doing; it was not half-past ten; all was acting.

The fact is, he owed me five pounds and his company another thirty.

.

AFTER the actor has passed a reasonably long hour going nowhere for no reason, but breaking up his progress very admirably, with a condescending glance at this charming person, another at another, he arrives intact (but for a lost hour) at a destination. But what is he to do there? "God only knows," he mutters with a sigh. The actor relies very much on God helping him along. God who is as wise as he is kind, leads his footsteps generally towards some haunt where idleness and idlers are to be found.

He comes across two other actors. They make fewer faces when together. The thought, the communion of business gets them serious, then dull again, so dull that before long unless "shop" be the talk they are driven apart in despair and back goes my actor home.

Not crestfallen . . . not depressed, mind you. No, he has a motive. He, feeling lost, comes to see that he can wear easily the expression of one who has lost something. "Well now, . . ." his face seems to say, "could I—could I have left it at home?" . . . "But what am I to have left at home?" is the dumb thought which meanders through his brain.

"I do not know, but never mind, let me keep walking, let me turn towards my house, and what I am to have lost will soon occur to me. Ah! I have it. I have lost—I have lost—didn't I really lose something last week? Yes,

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the copy of my new part. Tut-tut-tut," he clicks . . . and now he hurries. He is looking very vexed now. He is doing splendidly. Home—upstairs—

"Mary, Mary, didn't I leave my part behind me?"

"When, sir? . . . this morning, yes, sir?"

"This morning!—No, last Tuesday."

"No, sir, I'm sure I don't know, sir."

"Is your mistress at home, Mary?"

"Sure, sir, she's in the front room"; and in goes the actor.

"Well, my dear, is dinner ready? what, in half an hour? Very well then, I'll go and look over my part for a few minutes." And without hesitation, he produces it out of his tail-coat pocket.

Innocent nature, but I suggest quite ignorant of realities.

.

BUT this is only a picture of the *mediocre* actor of to-day who has no idea how to occupy his time or how to work and who does not understand what life is. And but that there are too many thousands of such actors it would not be worth sketching.

Now for a good actor: I will take three who wrote books in their spare time since this book is about books.

Dr. Mantzius was such an actor: he knew how to work. When out of his theatre, as well as in it, he gave hours to reading, to writing and to getting at the whole sense of Drama and Theatre; Luigi Rasi of Firenze was another; and Dr. Hevesi of Budapest a third.

The first wrote the *History of Theatrical Art*; the second wrote *I Comici Italiani*. The third has written plays and books too numerous to recall: and all three were actors

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for many years and stage-managers as well. And I mention these three because their books are possibly more important than most other theatre books, being the work of theatre men who wished to get at the truth about their work, by unceasing study and practice.

Mantzius' work was in the collection at Amsterdam, Rasi's was not, and the only thing I found there by the good Hevesi was the preface to *On the Art of the Theatre* by the writer of this book.

But these actor-writers in their books all treat of the theatre as a whole, taking it as a serious affair. They do not think solely of little matters as did the author of *Our Problems*. And does the actor see no advantage to him in working hard during the day; especially reading a very great deal more than he does?

What should he read? Well, there are plenty of catalogues of books issued by men who have been working for him in every land (nearly every land) and the number of books which were written for the actor these last twenty years is more than he guesses. There are over three hundred catalogued in the Dutch list. They go thoroughly into every branch (or nearly every branch) of this composite art. There are over 2471 entries (old and new books and magazine articles) in the New York Public Library catalogue, and this list is confined to solely one branch of this work. There are about 2640 entries (old and new books) in an English catalogue (Lowe). There are about 3000 entries in one French catalogue (Filippi) (mainly old books); and there are about 2000 (chiefly old) in an Italian catalogue (Rasi); and these are not booksellers' lists, but are lists made by the great collectors, containing selected books dealing with the stage in all branches. And it seems to me not too much to expect that the serious actor should come to know of these books . . . then to

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buy one . . . to buy another . . . then more and more, and to get at what they mean. It must be rather painful to them to read or surely they would read a great deal. They must consider it loss of time.

To the old actor it will be a solace some day, and as the young actor of to-day is some day to be an old man, I suggest that he should now become hardened to the practice of reading all about the Theatre.

Let him leave my book *On the Art of the Theatre* until the last. Let him begin with a book such as *From Betterton to Irving*, but let him really read it—and then pass on to the other books. •

In *Betterton to Irving* he will note that the author laughs at the “new movement,” and at me. That does no one any harm at all. Let him then read ten to fifteen rather more difficult books until he comes to E. K. Chambers’ *Mediæval Stage* (Oxford University Press): perhaps even to *The Elizabethan Stage* by the same writer: then Signor Rasi’s *Comici Italiani* (for he had better study Italian); then after some slight trouble with the French verbs, Mr. Germain Bapst’s books. Yes, he had better learn how to read Italian and French, and that will not prove so difficult if he wants to know what is in these books—the thing to do is to read on—stumble on, and he will come in time to travel with more or less ease. For *Theatre* is Teatro or Théâtre. *Stage* is Scène or Palco Scenico. *Actor* is Attore or Comico or Acteur. *Clairon* is Clairon, and *Pulcinella* is Pulcinella; and if on seeing these words dotted like stars about the pages of a book, if, on seeing other words which resemble our words, the actor is not excited and keen to get at the meaning, I should be very much surprised.

I do not for a moment imagine that the actor of pose whose picture I have drawn above will do this. But I

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could hope that some of the better younger actors will come to read these fine books, when they learn that they exist—and I would even ask them to read them.

Once they begin to read, they can but grow restless with desire to do better work, and go on reading so as to understand more and more of the task before them, even to understanding that it is a task which needs more loyalty to each other than they yet suppose, and a task which they cannot get through if they waste their time and leave it for others to do the hard work for them.

And when they come to buy these books—technical books for the most part—and when they come to read them and grow to like them well, they will find that there was much in the old Dramatics which was very very good, some which was even better than they had dreamed it could be; and then perhaps they will allow some of that old sense and sprightliness to revive in them and to inspire them to something more than apparently they are capable of . . . lacking these old forces.

Rapallo, 1922.

BOOKS, MULES AND IDLENESS
IN ITALY

BOOKS, MULES AND IDLENESS IN ITALY

I THINK it was the month of May and the year was 1920. We were two lovers of that other world, the world of books. To us a book contained all sorts of delight, for it is no matter that our subject was the Theatre—every province in this other world, every state, is something rare and strange. Every book-lover knows all about it, and as this one is for book-lovers I need not re-tell them what they know. I need merely say in the fewest words that we loved the contents of our books, the paper—bindings—character of type-setting—the shape—weight and build of the book, its significant date—its initial letters—silk markers—condition—and even creak of its hinges. In fact we were like every other book-lover—*pazzo di libri*.

And this day we were planning how to get more books—without a great expense. We decided to buy our books for nothing; to buy five hundred books of all kinds, and re-sell those which we did not want, keeping all the Theatre books. Buy £100 worth, sell £80's for £130 and thus pay our expenses and have our few Theatre volumes gratis.

We planned how we would have a book-shop: we were planning this as we went up the hill to San Pantaleo. A mule passed us, going down. We stopped, turned, and watched his steady pace, sure feet, excellent long ears, and his firm frame—and we decided to have six mules, two to begin with . . . and we might then have twelve later on.

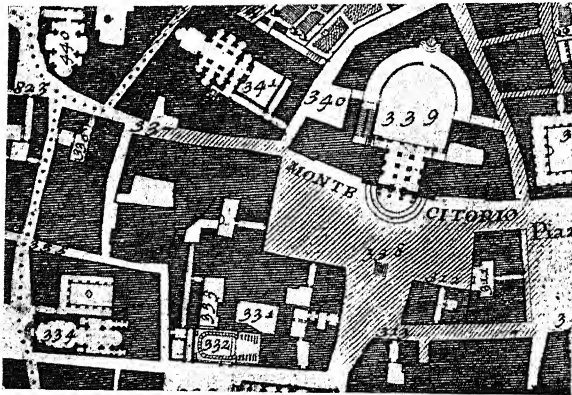
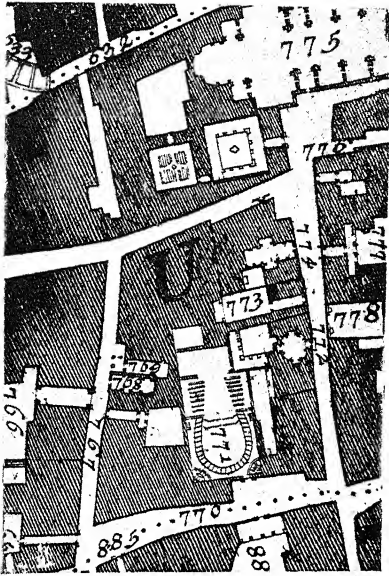
The two mules would leave San Pantaleo at—. But

BOOKS, MULES AND IDLENESS

let us build our shop first; dreams which do not shape themselves in a proper order are but nightmares.

For the shop, we fancy a certain one-storey cottage of about six rooms, which is half-way up the hill behind our house. As one is getting out of breath with one's climb, one comes to a clearing, pale green, like faded tapestry around and beneath, above pure blue, and more silent than ever. There is a stable behind, and a church and its bell near by. In this cottage we should line one room with shelves and then we should saddle and pannier the mules and, folding up six empty sacks, put three of them in each pannier and send them out on their first journey.

Where to? Well, it doesn't matter very much, for the last thing one would have expected to find in a village eight miles to the south of Sant' Ambrogio would be books: the last book one would expect to see the *Memoirs | of the | affairs of Greece | containing | an account of the military and political events | which occurred in 1823 and following years | with | various anecdotes | relating to | Lord Byron | and | an account of his last illness and death | by Julius Millingen | etc.* London Printed for John Rodwell | Bond Street | 1831. Yet this book is precisely the first volume I saw in the only book-shop in this village. On opening it, I saw written in Dr. Millingen's own hand "James Millingen"; so it was the copy the young man of Missolonghi gave, when an old man, to his son. It was bound in its original close-grain cloth, a faded red. The next book to this was a copy of the New Testament, 1826—also the property of "James Millingen 1829." "The design of Christianity is to elevate man to a participation of the Divine Nature," he had written in ink. Now Millingen lived in Firenze, or was in Firenze, in April, 1851, for in his Bible I found two or three torn strips of a letter to him



SECTIONS FROM THE LARGE "PIANTA DI ROMA," BY NOLLI (1748).

Which show us four of the Theatres, two of which were still existing in 1919.

Teatro Argentina, 771.

Teatro Pace, 611.

Teatro Capranica, 332.

Teatro Granari, 618.

See page 84.

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which he had used as markers. I don't know what these two books may be worth . . . I gave three lire for the two . . . that is to say, about ninepence.

But it is not for such a trifle that our mules prance, and as they are still outside in the street and only pawing the ground, let us linger awhile and go right through the rubbish in this first book-shop.

We found an atlas with a hand-coloured frontispiece which was very beautiful, published by "Santini, Venezia," in 1783, for which we gave sevenpence; and a second atlas which illustrated "*Etudes Statistique sur Rom*," thirty-two plates (1809 to 1813), showing the projects for improvements of Roma by the French, one and sixpence. (The other volume we found later.) What interests us in this volume is not the good state of all the plates, nor the excellent leather binding, nor anything an archæologist loves, but solely five little plans of theatres which we found on these plans of the city. The Italian alone amongst Europeans has really known the high position the Theatre should hold, and even in his plans of cities delineates the exact form of a theatre with as great care as he delineates a cathedral or a palace.

The Frenchman is popularly believed to be the man of men for things theatrical and assuredly he has produced great dramatists and famous actors, but he was far behind the Italian in this little matter of building theatres in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

When the French began to need theatres it seems they managed to make shift with tennis courts which they adapted, transforming them into charming little play-houses. On the other hand the Italian conceived afresh and built as soon as the idea came. France is not much concerned to record any of her theatres on her plans of cities, beyond putting a black square and the word

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"Theatre." Italy, on the other hand, as I have said, shows us an exact little plan of each theatre, its shape very carefully defined. (See Plate 26.) So if we find any such plan in our travels we count it worth picking up. In this one-and-sixpenny book we found plans of the Teatro Aliberti, Teatro d'Apollo, Teatro Argentina, Teatro Capranica, Teatro Pace; but of the Teatri Valle and Pallacorda and Granari there were no plans. These eight theatres, by the way, are all seventeenth or eighteenth century and three of these theatres still exist.

But to the books, for the mules grow restive.

These few insignificant finds in the one book-shop of the first village we stopped at in our expedition suggest what we might find if we took thirty mules and had thirty pairs of eyes, and had thirty different desires. But we two have one desire only. We care only to find books upon the Theatre and we like them best when illustrated.

Now the term "books upon the Theatre" as a rule signifies to the English mind some "Life" of an actor: but to us the label "books upon the Theatre" has a slightly wider significance than that, hence the need of mules, and the fantastic desire to set up a bookseller who only buys books.

For in our travels we have certainly come across a number of little books which gave us not only the portraits of actors, not merely the reports of squabbles and box-office receipts, but which have shown us the magnificent theatres themselves and detailed records and pictures of the performances of centuries ago. Of course, Garrick is Garrick, and Kean is Kean, just as mustard is mustard, but we don't want mustard all the time and for every meal; and we don't want critics who inform us that the whole art of the kitchen and the entire history of the stage begins and ends in mustard and Kean.

BOOKS, MULES AND IDLENESS

There is an English book which has always worried me called *Doctor Syntax's Tour in the Hebrides*, or some such title. But whenever I see the name of this book in type, or one of its illustrations, it depresses me very much, for as I have seen it in nearly every catalogue I have received for the last twenty years, I have come to the conclusion that it is one of those semi-brilliant books with only too good illustrations which everyone is expected to "discover." It seems part of a young Englishman's education to be the first to know of Dr. Syntax touring round and round—but without mules.

Let us to our mules, let us rummage in the panniers and extract a few of the little books we have found. They are nothing to speak of, and yet possibly new to some people.

Fortunius Licetus | de | Monstris | ex recensione | Gerardi Blasii, M.D. & P.P. etc. etc. 1688. | 1 lire, i.e. twopence halfpenny.

That is surely new to no one, still it is not a book found every day, nor for 2½d. Now where did I come across this little volume? I forget. My boy remembers . . . the mules whinny with pleasure; it was in Livorno.

Let the mules vanish now, until I have finished, and this will be all the easier since they never existed.

I was staying at Livorno in a big hotel called The Palace Hotel wherein were some three hundred rooms, and a great quantity of fine marble. Signor Spainì and his wife, the directors at that time, were very friendly; and as I was the sole visitor, except for an old woman and her maid who lived in the left wing, I had about four waiters to attend to my wants, and things all very fine and regal.

One day Montgomery Carmichael, the then English Consul, came to see me. You know the Consul? No? Well,

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everyone for sixty miles round Livorno at that time knew and loved him. He was one of those genial Englishmen over here who were wont to win for England all that the stiff kind always lost.

Carmichael told me of the book-shops of Livorno. He knew I liked books. What he didn't know was that whenever too long alone I grow depressed, when depressed, I need excitement, when I need excitement, I take to a book, just as another and a wiser man takes to the bottle.

So, on hearing where the book-shop was, I was out and in it, and found *de Monstris*, bound in complete vellum, in very good condition, four pages of MS. in front, and twelve and a half pages MS. at the end, all writ in very fine Italian, and a marionnette on page 274 (when the numbering has been corrected, as you know it needs to be around those pages).

A terrible marionnette . . . and yet, a marionnette or nothing. But even now, I have not announced a real find—a real Theatre book. Come then, let it pour since it promises to drizzle.

(1) *Direzioni | della prospettiva teorica | etc. Istruzione | A Giovani Studenti di Pittura | e Architettura | nell'Accademia Clementina* | etc. da Ferdinando Galli | Bibiena | in Bologna Lelio del volpe—1732—2 vols. in 16mo—pp. 304—125 plates—vellum.

(2) *Paradossi | per praticare | La Prospettiva | senza saperla* | da Giulio Trioli. Bologna Gioseffo Longhi 1683—1 vol. in 8vo—pp. 184—128 woodcuts—vellum.

(3) *Delle | scene | e | Teatri | del | Chiara | monti*. Scipione Chiaramonti in Cesena, Verdoni 1675—1 vol. in 8vo—pp. 102—36 woodcuts—half-leather.

(4) *Descrizione Istorica | del Teatro | di Tor di Nona | di Felice Giorgi* | etc. Roma, Cannetti; 1795—1 vol. in 8vo—pp. 56—9 folding plates—paper boards



GIUSEPPA CORTESI.

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY OLDANI.

She was one of the incomparable dancers of the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1804 she became Prima Ballerina Assoluta. Until recently this incomparable dancer was almost unknown. See page 87.

BOOKS, MULES AND IDLENESS

(5) *Pianta | Facciata | e | spaccato | del | Nuovo Teatro | Eretto in Bologna | nella via | di Santo Stefano* | Giuseppe Badini. Bologna, Ramponi—1805—1 vol. in 4to—pp. 20—3 folding plates—original boards. (Rare copy on blue paper.)

(6) *Memoria | sulla | illuminazione a Gas | Dei Teatri* | Giovanni Aldini Milano—Società Tipog. dei Classici Italiani. 1820—1 vol. in 8vo—pp. 117—2 coloured plates. Brochure.

(7) *Sopra | Il Novello Ornamento | Del Teatro | del Vezaro | in Perugia* | Coriolano Monti. Roma—1838—1 vol. in 16mo—pp. 16—1 plate—paper boards.

(8) *Al Merito Impareggiabili* | della Signora Giuseppina Cortesi | etc. (Plate 27.) Bernardino Mezzanottè. Perugia—L. Cavalieri. 1804—1 vol. in 8vo—pp. 8—1 portrait. Brochure.

(9) *Intorno | all'Arte Comica | Lettera di Federico Pescantini*. Bologna—Turchi, Veroli e Cie. 1827—1 vol. in 8vo—pp. 14—original pink paper.

These nine books are nothing awe-inspiring either to look at or to pay for; but if their size and price are insignificant, their contents are delicious, and I always find myself wondering, as though the last century were to-day, how the publishers are able to get out such books at the price.

Nine books, possibly known to a number of collectors, and yet none of them in the well-known collections of theatrical books made by Filippi (1861), Farrenc (1866), Schatz (1914), Rasi (1912), or Claretie (1920). (The dates are the dates of their catalogues.) The Victoria and Albert Museum Library, in 1922, had but three of the nine books.

These nine books cost me under £9 (I'd not sell them for £50); but that is because I am one of those lucky people. Claretie who had about 10,000 books had not my nine volumes, nor Filippi who had about 16,000,

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nor Farrenc who had about 500 only, Schatz about 2400, Rasi about 2500. And I was surprised to learn last week that the Bologna Municipal Library did not possess a copy of No. 5, which is printed on thick blue paper; my copy also has one of the plates (a plan of the theatre) altered in pencil for the incoming victors, the French actors sent down to Italy by Napoleon. It seems clear to me that this pencilled alteration on the plan has been made by a Frenchman, from suggestions, probably made by an officer. My copy was evidently struck off in great haste. The theatre was opened 19 May, 1805, and Napoleon was present. My copy has the date MDCCCV. The pages are not numbered, and the pressure has been so great that one fancies that a blind man could read it by touch. It is like Napoleon to hurry things on and haste is evident on every page.

Books Nos. 1, 2, and 3 deal with perspective, stage scenes and theatre construction, yet one has seldom seen copies of them in theatrical libraries.

Book No. 4 of my list is a little volume containing nine folding plates which show us the different theatres which were erected one after another on the same spot in Roma (opposite the Castle of St. Angelo, on the edge of the Tiber) as theatre after theatre was destroyed by fire. One rarely finds all the plates, and one more rarely finds as perfect a copy as mine is for twenty shillings, even a modest bookseller in Italy will ask more for it.

Yes, it would be indeed pleasant to have a book-shop on the slopes of San Pantaleo, and every month see two mules arriving laden with fifty to sixty books in each pannier.

Two mules from Torino, two from Parma, two from Roma and Napoli, and two from Ancona; eight mules on

BOOKS, MULES AND IDLENESS

the trot, all the time, bringing glorious or modest little books "Sopra il Teatro" . . . "Sur le Théâtre."

Yet French books on the Theatre are best found in Paris, though, after all, they never quite rival the Italian books on the same subject. Never? Well, hardly ever, for some French historians of the Theatre are giving us more to-day than any others.

And for older works there is Dumont; what enchantment in this book of his! And MM. Radel and Giraud—what delight! Then Donnet, Jullien, Olivier and M. Nutter. Most of these lovers of the Theatre are gone, but I like to think that some still live and get more and more correct as the days go on.

For this is the life of the historian. He starts by being utterly correct—instinctively; but, alas! as he advances on his path, he begins to know something, and that always having proved fatal, he trips up and issues a book eight years too soon, full of errors.

We do not see the errors, but he does; and eight years later he probably comes to learn that his book is a mass of errors, eight years later still, he is aware of what comes of tasting an apple before it is ripe. And here, with a wince, I leave you, for I have just tasted the bitterness of attempting and failing to write about these books.

Still I will plunge in deeper next time; for until well in, how can one ever expect to get through? And then I hope to report what my imaginary mules have brought in to me . . . up to me . . . and to be able to record nine or even ten more books seldom, if ever, found in the great theatrical collections.

Rapallo, 1920.

ON CERTAIN BOOKSELLERS

ON CERTAIN BOOKSELLERS

I

There is a smile of love,
And there is a smile of deceit,
And there is a smile of smiles
In which these two smiles meet.

I HAVE always jogged along easily enough with this, the first verse of Blake's song on smiles and frowns, but to-day I came to a halt as I suddenly thought of Mr. Vannini—Signor Vannini the bookseller. What a strange double smile is his. Why does he smile like that when I am with him? Doubtless I am as funny as others, but since some thirty to forty people come into his shop every day, and since all are funny, and he of habitually melancholy aspects—why—when I appear should his smile be so doubly strange?

It's the smile of smiles in which the two smiles meet, which Signor Vannini gives out when I come in. We always call him Mr. Vannini, whereas Signor Merlino is "the Mago Merlino," Eva is Eva, Signor Rudolfi is "Poor-man," Signor Bottoil is "Dead Pa," Mario is "Mad Mario," M. Danthon is "Jorel fille," M. Rivière is "Bona-partie top"—and Mr. Dobell is Mr. Dobell, Suckling and Co. is Mr. Suckling, and Sotheran is immortal. Yet all are booksellers.

Of the Italians first . . . of the French and English in another book.

Since that smile on Vannini's face haunts me, I want to write about the faces, smiles, growls and odd and

ON CERTAIN BOOKSELLERS

ghostly ways of the other booksellers in Italy I have come across. I know what it means, that smile. It means what the actors in Elsinore meant . . . it means mischief.

If Mr. Vannini meant to be so eccentric as to try to turn bookselling into a paying business, it then would become indeed a very deadly smile. More than this, if he meant that, he would not smile at all. He would just be helpful, rather learned, somewhat dismal, and we the bookhunters would all be cowed, and I, for one, would have no books.

Mr. Vannini is a mysterious man, so he does not terrify us when we go in. Being serious too, he smiles that queer smile.

The shop is about twenty by thirty feet, not very high, and is lined, as are all such shops, with books, on most ordinary deal shelves stained a dark brown. A counter, very ordinary, a door with a glass window in it; and since we have come up to the door we must step back, for by it stands a beautiful thing . . . a young old lady . . . Mamma Vannini. She is, I suppose, in actuality some seventy years old; she stands erect, stands all the time by the door, opens it, curtsies, speaks like *Thisbe*—is discreet, and is the essence of all that is good breeding.

We who come in are guests, visitors to see her son—not quite exactly purchasers. Loud voices are responded to by her with quiet nothings—so timidly and sweetly said, that were my friend Parker suddenly to burst in, he would be as distressed about the state of her lungs as he was about the eyes of Ferdinando Bibiena.¹

But really the state of her lungs is doubtless as excellent as was the state of Parker's sight and hearing. Only things are different and differences make for interest.

¹ See "On Stage Lighting," pages 139-40.

ON CERTAIN BOOKSELLERS

She curtseys as you leave and, as she does so, makes me happy.

But her son, Mr. Vannini, has smiled his smile and it's up to this that I am leading you. Shall we look at him—the villain—how his eye sparkles in his rather moody face.

He is like his mother, perfect in manners; and like his father he sells in the same shop, probably the same old books, at the same old price.

I find this so remarkable and so Italian.—The fine Italian is not grasping—the old real idealism lingers with nearly all of them as a matter of course.

When I meet such men I see how it is that the belief of a third Italy endures. An Italy not founded upon any gimcrack basis of commerce but using commerce, not becoming commercial at root but rather founding their nation on the ancient character—distinguished, young, tough, dry, wise, indifferent and gracious, seeing life in the round, not in the rather too flat round of the franc, the dollar or the shilling.

The smile on Mr. Vannini's face puzzled me for a while. Now I know that it was first made up of real enjoyment in seeing someone enter with an obviously put-on expression of innocent ignorance about books; and of malicious delight to think how he would or rather could swindle the humbug who has dared to imagine that this look of innocent ignorance was not as familiar to him and his race for centuries as are the bindings of his own books.

Not that Mr. Vannini ever could even wish to swindle me. Once he showed me where I could buy white bread, took me to the baker's shop. It was at a time when white bread was not given to strangers without a ticket.

The minute before he had allowed me to buy from

ON CERTAIN BOOKSELLERS

him an eighteenth-century manuscript with nine large drawings in colour for—I won't tell you the sum. I could afford it easily, but I couldn't afford to tell you.

In the same town lives, or rather lived, *Dead Pa*. His name was Bottoil. He had a shop eight times the size of Mr. Vannini's full of stationeries, and his wife, two daughters—women of twenty-eight to thirty-two—sons-in-law, one son and two assistants were kept busy selling slate pencils, envelopes, India-rubber and sealing-wax all day long. Far back in this shop, in a small envelope of glass, sat *Dead Pa*, i.e. Bottoil, who is now dead and from whom, while he lived, I bought nothing. Now that he is dead the Mariner hath his will—or rather a bit of it as you shall shortly hear.

For *Dead Pa* had a mysterious other house at the back somewhere.

When I first visited him, he took me out to it. I expected to enter a small room of books. I found a four-storeyed *house* of books, prints, drawings, printing presses and all sorts of things. It was where he and his family lived, and where he died.

"This is an interesting little thing," he said, handing me a book. The sky was clear, the day hot, the streets quiet, and he had gone from the stationery annex and was now in his element.

But this element of his was, alas, tinged with the golden rays of a setting sun, and this interesting item which he drew out of a locked drawer (for he was seated and prepared to give time to the matter and to do big business with the American he took me to be) was *L'Idea | di Tutti le Perfezioni | introduzione al Balletto de' Serenissimi Principi | Francesco & Antonio Farnesi | fatto rappresentare dal Serenissimo Sig. | Duca di Parma | nel suo nuovo Teatrino | in occasione de' felicissimi sponsali*

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del Serenissimo signore Principe Odoarso | suo primogenito | con la Serenissima signora Principessa | Dorotea Sofia di Neoburgo. | Poesia del Dottore Lotto Lotti, attual servitore di S.A.S. | e | musica di Giuseppe Fossi. | Piacenza 1690—5 plates.

I did not know the reputation or the contents of this work at the time or I would have paid the high price he asked, and, since that day in 1914, I have not seen another copy in any of the twenty-nine bookshops I have entered, nor in any of the catalogues I have looked into.

He then showed me a copy of Paolo Donati's *Teatro Farnese*. He asked me a big sum for it, and asked justly too, for it is a worthy book, and I'd have paid the price if I had not bought the same book three hours previously for one-third the price he proposed—from M. Vannini who had smiled as he sold it me. Do you begin to see the smile . . . and the fine bookseller himself?

And so we went on and on, looking at numbers of good things: I marvelling at his wonders, he wondering at his mistaking me for a rich American . . . or did he think I was one who would presently close the interview with—"Well—send me the things you have shown me: I am at the Hotel Verdi"?

Anyhow when I next came to Verona I heard of his death. Buying some postcards in the annex, I asked after the old gentleman. "He is dead," they said, and went on selling the pencils and the sealing-wax. And I wondered: and I thought how strange that was.

"And the books, can I see them?" "Alas no! they are bundled away upstairs."

Bundled away! and *Pa* loved his books, knew them, sorted them out daily with such care, priced each one, tempted me with some, and looking for a rich American all the time, that fellow who failed to arrive in time.

ON CERTAIN BOOKSELLERS

"Might I see the books?"

"You may, if we can find the key."

"Dov'è la chiave?" calls daughter-dear to someone else. "Perduta," calls back someone. "Come after lunch and we will have found it."

So after lunch I went again and, the key being found, I was allowed the run of the big room with the books, prints, drawings and all littered all over the place.

All priced, but no eyes left in the family, or rather no hearts to read with—all dark, these dead daughters and sons-in-law of *Dead Pa*.

For alone, upstairs, I came across little collections of prints of all kinds grouped in excellent order, each item pencil-marked on the back, nothing left unlooked at and unmarked.

And I thought, "Should I tell those folk downstairs that these things were loved by their father sufficiently for him to save them and keep them thus ordered?" But then thought I, "They are not of the same spirit, and I am more of his spirit than they are—and if I can secure and save some of these pretty little plans of theatres, plates by Berain—views of towns—head and tail pieces—and get them cheaply, I yet do him as much service as though I drew their attention to their value, for I shall assuredly take care of them."

And I decided to put his name (and not theirs) on each item and to enter his name (and not theirs) in my indexed catalogue. And this is how I came to write the nom de mort *Dead Pa* on the back of each item,

"14 Berain designs" 1 lira 25c. . *Dead Pa*.

"Plan of the Teatro di Livorno" 30c. . *Ditto*.

But I cannot recall his face and I cannot forget Mr. Vannini's.

ON CERTAIN BOOKSELLERS

I will leave this town now and pass to another. A surprising town; solitary, but full of booksellers.

One was a lady—called Eva Mantovese, *Eva* for short, and short she was; a most homely small person, sitting in an icy-cold shop always open to the air and storms and frost; and never, seemingly, aware of the cold. Her face I remember well. She always looked surprised and like a bird. Some twenty-five thousand books in her three rooms downstairs, and in her corridors and passages leading upstairs. She would allow me the run of the place. What a kind woman—and quite free from commercialism. You have heard perhaps that Italians are grasping and on the make. I have found only a very few such in Italy, and I think it well to record this here.

In Eva's shop I have spent, I suppose, in all some forty-seven hours; but not forty-seven shillings; and yet in my collection I find forty-seven books marked as coming from her library.

A second shop in this town is kept by a terribly silent man. It is small, there are not two thousand books there, many piles of old magazines. I never knew his real name. His silence somehow prevented my doing more than look very hard and quietly at his books. And to his silence I in some measure attribute the name I gave him in my catalogues, that of *Poorman*. I felt his poverty in the awful silence and he looked poor too; now I recall him he looked one of the poorest in Italy.

It is not usual for booksellers here to be talkative or helpful, unless they be of the Olympian order; and there are only five or six of these in the peninsula. The others are all very silent, very helpless, . . . I mean not at all helpful to you. It is almost useless to ask . . . "Do you happen to have a copy of such and such a book?" for the answer surely will be "No." Ask for a second, ask for a

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third, and you soon see that this is true, for the answer is always "No." I have often tested this. "Have you a guide to Lucca . . . an old guide?" "No" comes the answer pat. I turn to the right and there in front of me is *Guida di Lucca*, 1805.

In Italy you are supposed to do the fishing and, like a wise fisherman, to keep quiet. Whether Italian books are really alive and shy like fish, I'm not quite sure, but I begin to suspect they are.

And suppose you ask for no special book; suppose you mention some subject as I used to do. "Have you some books on the Theatre?" The answer is generally "Niente," which means "Nothing." And yet English people imagine that all Italians are like those flashing and perky Italian waiters who are always so talkative and find you everything. Italian waiters are actors, that is all. Italian booksellers cannot bother to act, unless it be to pretend to be rather weary and morose.

So now I always go in and give an hour to reading the catalogue and the names on the backs of the books. Though these seldom tell me much. As an example of this DE | ANF | SCI: | MAF. is not quite enough to make one aware that the book deals with the *Anfiteatri* and is by the famous *Scipione Maffei*.

In the town where *Eva* and the *Poorman* preside over their books are six more interesting bookshops.

Further south is the town where *Mad Mario* lives. I call him that because his wife, Madame Mario, a stately lady who attends to the selling, commands in the House of Mario, sells the books and cooks, all in one room. He does the book-fishing in the town and comes back with nets or sacks of books, bought by the weight. A very proper way to buy books if you come to consider it.

Mario is sometimes in a very bad temper, but that

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is his misfortune, his *disgrazia* . . . not his fault, for when the surly fellow smiles, it is delightful. Not picturesque in the operatic sense, . . . merely good. A good sweet smile.

She is the best seller of books in Italy. She'll sell me a *Guide to Naples*, 1862, for thirty-eight lire, where in any other shop I should have got it for twenty. She has a talent, and is very silent too. Yet when she speaks it is with the surprising result that I always pay her what she asks.

And does one not usually pay what is asked in Italy? Well, I know only three towns where one may haggle without offence.

IT is of the *Gran Mago Merlino* I would now speak. His shop is in Trapoli, and when even I was wont to go in to get a book (and that was as often as I was depressed) I would find him in his inner room glowering dully across his desk at me . . . looking coldly hideous and dangerous. By his side an ill-paid clerk, hunched up like a worn lean horse, would sit and scribble in a ledger. At that time I was visiting a Magnifico. I do not mention this rare fact entirely for fun, but more in sorrow. He had his palace on the slopes above the city. He and his Lady had invited me to Trapoli, saying after a full year's correspondence how much they wanted to see my theatre come into existence, and what wretches other people were, not to establish it for me and for the benefit of all mankind . . . etcetera. This was well meant. "All mankind" is not my aim, though; I only wish that a few thousand people should become aware of the worth of a bright, if not a brilliant theatre, and that theatre mine, and that this seriousness of theirs should be the outcome of having perceived that whereas a commercial theatre helps to

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ruin a nation, one of the kind I want helps to preserve a nation. But one should not allow oneself to wish.

Still in those days when the Magnifico and his Lady wrote and spoke so graciously to me and were so critical of the "others" who did nothing, I came to accept it after twelve months as a good, if faint, sign not exactly from heaven, but anyhow from the Hill, from the slope of which magnificoes are raised above . . . the others. That they proved rather weaker than the others they criticised is no proof that princes as a whole are not to be trusted. This I saw was merely an exception, and proves to me the rule of one. I do not as yet believe in the rule of three—which besides awakening my scepticism puzzles me.

The Magnifico and his Lady have come into this note on booksellers because it was their rash and daring attempts, and respectable failures, which caused me those moments of awful melancholy which had to undergo treatment—i.e. the frequent visits to *Il Gran Mago Merlino*.

Some there are, who, when great melancholy is descending on them, have recourse to the vine, the hop or the barley. I would go to these, but I like something besides chatting inebriatedly to eager journalists and a headache next day, and I like something good to remain over after the treatment if only to prove that I got the best of life, the very best out of the very worst of it. Books do this if valuable enough, if interesting, and if well printed on good paper, and well bound. These one reads—champagne on the other hand makes one talk.

So in my melancholy at Trapoli, I took to books.

Entering at *Il Gran Mago Merlino's* door—the bell tinkling—I would glide on into the second room, that in which he sat. I turn the covers of the first books I

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come across, I find they are on the Theatre—books for me in short; and then, after looking at each title page and on closing the last, I would dare to ask, "Have you any books on the Theatre to-day?"

"None," growls *Merlin*.

"What a pity," I reply.

We have not yet looked at one another. I open the first book again, and giving a rather theatrical start, I cry out with muffled surprise, "Why, deuce take me, if this isn't one." "Sold," cries *Merlino* truculently, at which, to cap his cry, I cry "Ah."

That authorises me to be the next one to speak. I have, by my exclamation, nullified his remark. My "Ah" sped after his "Sold" and pierced it dead.

So anon I say quietly and with dreary indifference, "To whom have you sold it may I ask?"

"To a collector in Paris who buys all my theatrical books," he snarls. "And this one,—for how much?" I coo huskily, as though through a fog. "For eight lire," says he in a hard slow voice; to his own surprise actually answering my question. I say no more. I take out my purse. I take one ten lire piece from a bunch of ten lire pieces; I put the rest away; I place the ten on his desk, and, fixing him with my eye, I say, "It is better to sell it to me for ten than to another for eight"; and being a man of sense, although fierce, ugly, and a magician, he takes the ten lire, and actually growls "Thank you." Thus is my malady cured, and magnificoes forgotten—forgotten by one curiously unable to feel safe with Democracy.

But I thank my Fate that forgetting them takes me rather a long time, and that ere I leave Trapoli I become depressed and heart-sore regularly once every other day. For I stayed there six weeks, and so I was twenty-three

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times driven to *Mago Merlino's* bookshop with its intoxicating terrors and delicate joys. Twice I was so terribly depressed, I even paid ninety lire for a book; once so utterly woebegone, I plunged to one hundred and forty lire.

This was my magnum, my great carouse. It was too fierce, this grief and joy, while it lasted, but now that it's gone I have something splendid left.

II

SINCE I travelled in Z fashion from city to city, my recital of these travels cannot be amiss if it follows a like course: so with your permission, we will leave the magic *Merlin* and return to *Dead Pa*.

After I had taken many a good thing from him, and he away, I regretted it; I regretted I had not taken more. All told I had only removed some twenty-eight to thirty slight pieces. I have wished always to remain a modest collector. To be seen moving with difficulty out of a shop and laden with untold wealth in the shape of books and prints and drawings is not wise. It is next to saying "send them round to the hotel." But once home at St. Ambrogio, near Genova, I regretted I had not been bolder in the house of Bottoil. But, thank heaven, a very deep depression soon lent me wings and sent me there again. It had to be very deep because Verona is very far, some ninety-five miles. Princes were not the cause this time. Any little thing was at that time able to depress me suddenly. Things which other people lightly brush away with the awful laugh of youth and scepticism, weigh me quite down.

I had no money; it was that crushed me this time; and I was almost in despair about it, when I remembered in time the old saying "When the last penny's gone, make le Grand Tour." So my son Teddy and I packed our grand trunk, and putting on the grand air, we took train for the north. As we entered the first tunnel, eighty-eight yards from the station of Rapallo, all traces of our late

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melancholy had left us. We soon swept into Genova, curved round it and along to Voghera, on to Parma and in another curve up to Verona.

The excitement was intense. Not half an hour after our arrival we were in the string and blotting-paper department of Bottoil's shop, and asking if we might go upstairs. Again the cry, "Dov'è la chiave?" and this time all was well. "Go upstairs, it is in the door," said the eldest daughter of Bottoil, handing two pieces of black sealing-wax to a customer. We went out of the shop trembling with delight and round to the house—inside, and up to the third floor. My boy gets there first, two steps at a time, and I hear him shouting, "The key is broken off in the door," and there we both stood in front of the door—staring at Fate. It had been wrenched off. "*Pa's* revenge," is what we stood thinking of: was it that? It looked so like *Pa*. Useless to attempt to turn that stump of a key without a handle for this is no ordinary happening. Fate has stopped us, and we may as well go downstairs again. I linger two moments and attempt to look through the door (not through the keyhole) and I seem to see inside an old figure in the middle of the room lying clasping a heap of books; twelve of which were the very books I had been promising myself should soon be mine.

We went down and out and sat in a caffè thoroughly tired. "Io sono stanco" ("I am tired"), I said: I remembered that it was a bookseller who had taught me these the first three words of Italian I ever knew.

He was a very merry fellow. I bought some books and postponed paying him. He sent his bill three or four times to remind me. I hadn't forgotten, but I was travelling from city to city, and one day arrived a letter. It began: "Egregio Signore, Io sono stanco," etc., which, as you

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know (and I soon learned), means "Dear Sir, I am tired"—and I knew what the rest would be saying—"of waiting," etc. But booksellers are not commercial until spoiled; and Signor Giannini, who now always greets me with "Io sono stanco" and a roar of laughter, never grew icy with me, never said he would be taking action, and so forth. He always understood, with some thirty other booksellers I knew, that everyone will pay, and does pay, and has paid as soon as everyone can.

I was once in a small book-shop in Modena—a very small one. It consisted of one very small room measuring twelve feet by sixteen; the place lined with books to the ceiling and very dirty and very dark. I went in. It was ten o'clock in the morning. There was a ladder, one chair by the open door, and one behind a table at which sat a sort of bookseller. I asked for permission to look around. The place was at my disposition. I mounted the ladder and began to search. Great silence prevailed: no one came in, no one went out: the man neither spoke nor moved. It was soon eleven o'clock and I had found no book on the Theatre. I had shifted the ladder five times; I was now half-way up the ladder and giving a last glance at each book in the final section of this silent library. Then, slowly, I did begin to hear far-off voices; little, quiet, rumbling voices, below me. On looking down, I saw that a quite ordinary-looking Modencse had come in and was sitting on the stool by the door, and saying now and again a word or two in Italian to the bookseller, who quietly and occasionally grunted a short reply.

Indifference was in both voices, indifference was in the air; nothing stirred. I went on with my search, I found absolutely nothing; but descending with a coloured paper cover, I asked how much I might take it for and was told one lira. So I paid this, and, while waiting for

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the change, I glanced for a moment at the stranger who had come in.

He was entirely indescribable and expressionless.

"Lei parla Inglese, Signore?" ("You speak English, Sir?") I asked him. There was a sharp silence for a moment: and then slowly, deliberately, without moving, without any expression at all, like a clock going off, he answered very quietly, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star." Nothing more.

I tried to laugh; he didn't laugh, so I tried not to. He said no more. I nodded and left the shop; but I think when I recall the circumstances, the silence of the place, and the ancient city of Modena, that it is quite the strangest, because the most unexpected, speech I ever heard in my life.

.

I HAVE spoken of these places, where my books come from, as shops,—the men in them as booksellers; and I suppose they actually *are* shops and sellers, but when I see some Italian enter one of these places and hear him speak to the gentleman inside, I realise that it is not merely a shop, nor the librarians merely sellers. They are delightful little spots in cities where exceedingly courteous men live among books and allow one now and again to carry some away . . . of course no one could call my old friend *Merlin* courteous, he is only sinister; but then, one must not forget, he is a magician, and comes from the East.

Rapallo, 1923.

TRAVELLING MONUMENTS

TRAVELLING MONUMENTS

“Per Nozze . . .”

IT is so natural that the Italians should have made these little ephemeral things after having made so many larger monuments of the durable kind.

I was holding one of the monuments of this ephemeral kind in my hand when looking across the Tiber (which for some reason Romans call the Tevere) at the massive pile raised to the memory of Augustus Cæsar, and it occurred to me that the little paper memorial in my hand stood some chance of living as long to tell us of him and her to whom it was dedicated as did a larger thing of stone and brick and marble.

What I held was a brochure of eight pages. Unlike the monument before me, this booklet was raised to record the marriage of Signorina Grancini and Signor Lamarre in 1901.

Unlike other booklets it becomes a monument, because an event in the lives of two more or less uncelebrated persons brings it into being. That event is their marriage, this book its monument.

I have several other such brochures, each one inscribed to as uncelebrated beings as my first . . . and dedicated to the day of their marriage.

These trifles, when they begin to travel, are all entered into the booksellers' catalogues as “Nozze” or “per Nozze,” that is, “for the marriage of.”

TRAVELLING MONUMENTS

WHEN some member of the family of Alpha marries the daughter of the house of Omega, a clever friend of both families may want to give a present to the bride or bridegroom; and being a student of archæology, or art, or biography, or what you will, searches in the archives of one or both of these families to find some little document which has somehow or other previously connected the two families.

The searcher may discover that in 1714 the Alphas possessed a theatre in Pesaro and that the daughter of Signor Beta Omega in 1732 was engaged as first singer there. He next discovers in another archive that this girl was called (let us say) Signora Canti, and in 1740 became celebrated as the first singer of her time, and was also lovingly remembered by the town of Pesaro for having sung for three successive years on the Festa of Santa Marta in aid of the Church of Santa Marta.

ECCOLA!—on this fact a little “Nozze” comes into being. All the evidence is brought together, nine to twelve pages are filled, and twenty or fifty copies are printed. On the wrapper or cover will be:

Per Nozze Alpha-Omega,
Maggio 11, 1899.

On the inside cover will be:

“ Memoria di Signora Canti ”
(Figlia di Signor Beta Omega)
e la festa di Sta Marta in Pesaro.
Ottobre 4.
1740-1743.

On the third page is a short letter addressed to the bride or bridegroom, or to both, offering the little tribute as a wedding gift. The twenty or fifty copies are then distributed to the guests, and all is over.

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WAS anything so learned ever prettier than this? For the little books are not the work of sentimentalists. It is, as a rule, a young and learned student from a university (a nephew of the bridegroom, perhaps) or some very capable historian who sets about raising this monument to record the marriage.

Maybe he is not rich enough to offer a silver teapot or a pair of Dresden china ornaments. And in this case his brother or brothers will join him in his offering, for he is not even rich enough to pay for printing thirty copies of a twelve-page booklet. He does the work; they pay for the printing, and all three make the offering.

In England we have no such custom. With us it is a motor car, or a silver teapot or nothing. Beyond that and into the realms of learning and fantasy our imagination does not soar. Yet I think that it is a custom which has only to be heard of in every land for it to be in time adopted. It is good, useful, distinguished, and if well written the booklet may become a permanent monument. For suppose all the thirty copies be not preserved by all the thirty guests. Let but twelve be preserved . . . six of these may remain in the libraries of their owners; and the other six may go out somehow into the world and flutter into six book-shops and lie there for years.

SOONER or later you, or I, come along. One of us is perhaps interested in the records of the eighteenth century, particularly so in the celebrated singer, Signora Canti, about whom so very little is known save that she sang in Paris in 1752 and at Chambéry in the autumn of 1753; and one of us buys this brochure: buys it for 1s., takes it home in triumph, adds it to his collection, and, showing it to a friend, murmurs by chance two names,

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those of the utterly uncelebrated Signor Paolo Alpha and his fidanzata Signorina Maria Omega.

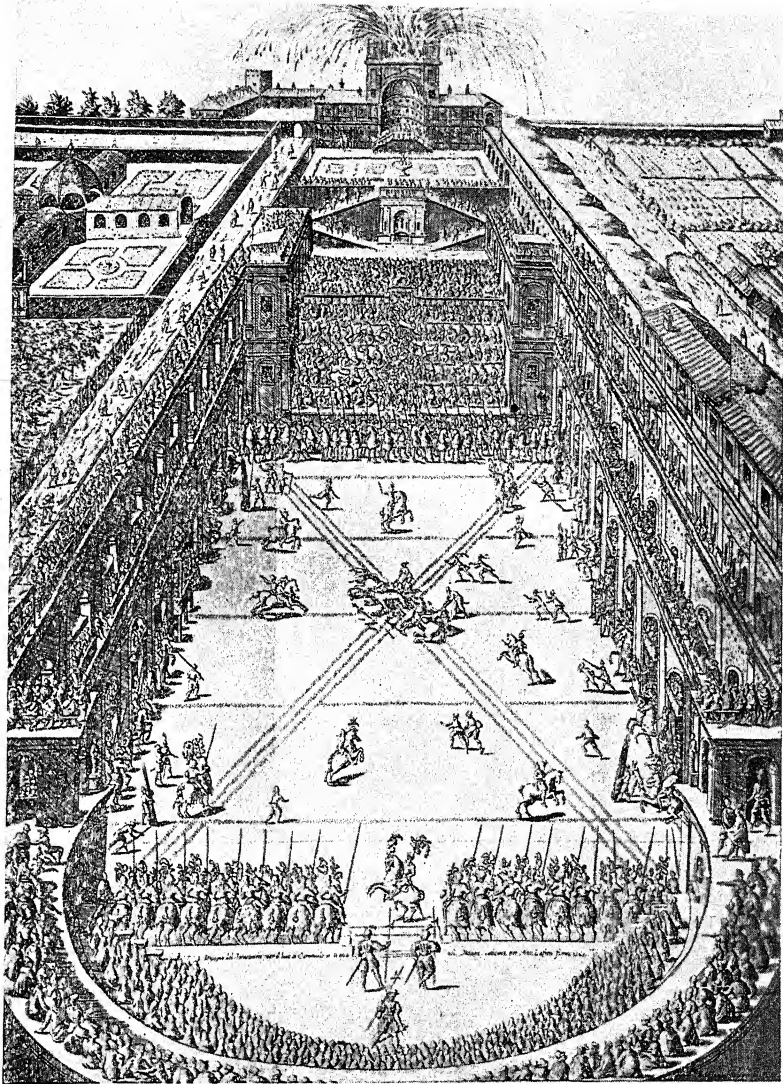
THESE little "Nozze" books are often sought for with diligence by a few, and are always preserved by them with the utmost affection and care. The Theatre somehow seems to have been a favourite subject for a "Nozze." It is a festive theme, and perhaps that is the reason. I have nine "Nozze" books dealing with theatric subjects. Here are the names of four of them:

(1) *Saggio | di | Robustiano Gironi | intorno | al teatro dei Greci | . . . consecrati | alle faustissimi Nozze, | dell'Inclita Damigella, | Donna Costanza d'Adda, | col Conte, | Carlo Borromeo. |* (Milano, 1822. 31 pp. 2 Colour Aquatints. Imperial quarto.) (Only thirty copies printed.) (A fine volume superbly bound by the author.)

(2) *Narrazione | del Torneo fatto | nella | Corte di Belvedere | in Vaticano | à di, V Marzo M.D.L.XV., | etc. (per) Nozze Altemps-Penna. (Roma, 1898. pp. 41.)* A brochure with one folding Plate. (See Plate 28.) (Offered by Alessandro Betocchi to the bride, Teresa Penna.)

(3) *Una lettera di Alfonso Lamartini | a G. B. Niccolini. | Per le nozze Grancini-Lamarre. Firenze, 1901. 8 pp. (Only 100 copies. Tied with a white silk ribbon. Offered by Mario Foresi to the bride and bridegroom.)*

(4) *I Teatri Moderni di Vicenza | dal 1650 al 1800, | etc. Per Nozze Cibelli-Pigatti. Bassano, 1894. pp. 56. (Given by Giovanni, Umberto, and Piero Mocenigo: dedicated to their Uncle Bortolo Pigatti on the marriage of his son Giovanni Pigatti to Anita Cibelli.) (The best work on the theatres of Vicenza. Giovanni, it appears, did the work, and the three brothers present it together.)*



TEATRO VATICANO, ROMA, BUILT BY BRAMANTE, 1514.

The Theatre was in the Corte di Belvedere, Vaticano, and is one of the very earliest permanent theatres built in Europe at the Renaissance. A Tourney is being performed here, at a marriage fête, in 1565. See page 114.

TRAVELLING MONUMENTS

AND I would put in a plea addressed to our modern times, and its so different folk. I would suggest that instead of devoting a large sum of money to purchase an unnecessary wedding gift of teapots, or clocks or motor cars, so that four motor cars arrive at the bridegroom's door, eight teapots of silver and fourteen clocks, our more distinguished wedding guest might ask some young student beginning his career to prepare a little booklet like a "Nozze" on some subject of interest to the bridegroom or his bride, or he might prepare it himself.

Where any archives exist in the family vaults these manuscripts might be gone through and the very subject found. When families have no archives in their vaults, let the booklet consist of something rare taken from an unknown manuscript, so that we collectors and students may come to preserve these trifles when we find them in the book-shops forty years later, and take them home with us, show them to some friend, and bring to life the two united names by uttering them once more aloud.

Genova, 1924.